

BY THE ELBE

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BY THE ELBE

VOL. I.

BY THE ELBE

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'CITOYENNE JAQUELINE' ETC.

[Kiddie, Horneville]

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON

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1876

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TO

MY FIVE GIRL FRIENDS

IN AFFECTIONATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE YOUTHFUL

COURAGE AND CHEERFULNESS WHICH LIGHTENED

MANY A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY AND

QUEER HALTING-PLACE

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OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.



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BY THE ELBE.



CHAPTER I.

DEAD GOLD FOR LIVING GOLD.

‘If it were only hard, cold metal,’ said Mary Carteret, wistfully, pulling down and drawing through her fingers one of the long clusters of the yellow flowers of the laburnum which hung all round her, making the place glorious.

She was standing in a laburnum avenue, which led from an old red house, by a rough break of furze and gorse, right into a dark pine wood and a brown and purple moor that had only a cart track running through them.

The avenue did not show always to the same advantage; laburnums are not graceful, not to say stately, among ornamental trees, and they get scraggy with age, while their very floweriness loads them for the greater part of the year with brown or ashen-coloured pods, which impair the tint of their otherwise somewhat scanty and patchy

foliage. But, for ten days or so, they are glorious—with that tempered richness of nature which is never oppressive—beyond anything in garden or field, unless it be those ‘broomy braes of June,’ famed in Scotch song.

The planter of this laburnum avenue had been so thriftlessly enamoured of the brief effect, as to sacrifice for it appearances, for the remaining weeks and months of the year. To do him justice, he had the additional temptation of the striking contrast offered by the sunny splendour of the laburnum in May, to the dark background of firwood and moorland into which it was shaded off by the furze and gorse thickets.

The young woman who now moralised over the senseless laburnum keenly appreciated both the light and the gloom, with their artistic balancing; and yet she was guilty of the very mercenary reflection which has been recorded.

In spite of it there was no mean closeness in Mary Carteret’s mouth, or rigid narrowness in her forehead, or elongated claw-like type in her hands, to indicate her, betimes, a miser; at four and twenty years of age, in the first prime of womanhood, her comeliness was remarkable for its breadth and openness. She had a wide forehead, eyes set well apart, a nose slightly too broad for symmetry, and a mouth whose red flexible lips were not small. Her very wealth of healthy, slightly tanned colour, reddening the pale, creamy whiteness of

the rest of the skin, which it invaded, with the abundance and nut-like gloss and tint of her twisted brown hair, under her flapping Leghorn hat, were all opposed to niggardliness of constitution and temperament. Her stature, as she stood there in her Holland gown, was not low, her gait was not wavering or crafty, far less cringing. There appeared to be nothing stunted or starved about the woman, not even anything of the disproportions that so often meet the view. She had somehow attained to her full height, however tender or raw the structure might otherwise be, in mind and body. Although she was a lady by descent and education—so perfectly a lady that her ladyhood was innate and unconscious—a certain seriousness, independence, and vigour in her air, opposed to the restrictions and helplessness of many of her class, reminded an observer of a good and true, brave and earnest peasant woman.

Still, Mary Carteret lamented that the balmy, fugitive grace of the flower in her hand could not be changed into common rattling coin of the realm. But she wished it in the bitterness of her heart, and out of very love for the flowers and trees and moor—nay, the earth on which she stood.

For want of a little of that money which hosts of men, his social, intellectual, and moral inferiors, seemed to earn without much difficulty, Mary's father was on the eve of bidding a long farewell

to the place which was his, and had been his forefathers', for more generations than even he could stay to count, and every stone of which was dear to him, with a regard half-filial, half-sacred, akin to that which the ancient Jew felt for his holy city Jerusalem.

It irked Mary with a sore irksomeness, as well as a resentful indignation and shame, that she could do nothing to prevent the sacrifice. For she was one of the unreasonable women who have existed in all generations and are somewhat clamorously conspicuous in the present, that cannot stand aside to be cared for and to suffer in silence, as their proper part in family and social calamity.

She was young, strong, eager, indefatigable; even without family disaster she would have thirsted to be up and doing some of God's work in this world. She could not have been content with being solely ornamental in a time of prosperity; so, simply to lend a pensive charm to adversity was a serious trial to her.

Perhaps she would have fallen more easily into her position, and borne it better, had her brothers played their parts gallantly, had there not been, to her mother's inexhaustible regret, certain peculiarities in Mary's education. As it was, with Regy and Tom of no earthly use in the strait—nay, serving as proximate causes of it, by their heavy college expenses, their failures at the bar and in taking orders, and as sources of draining cost

to this day away out in Australia and Canada—Mary was conscious of a responsibility increased tenfold, while she writhed under her inadequacy to the situation.

After all, what was so great a trial to Mary and her father, might not have struck the world at large, as an unmingled evil which did not afford a hope—save that it was so remote that it ceased to be a hope—of restitution. Even Mrs. Carteret only felt the blow intensely for a time, when the misery, happily for herself and her friends, was diverted into a thousand comparatively shallow channels—as the waters of some great river disperse by many mouths into the sea—through the multitude of details and minor anxieties which the great misfortune originated ; while to Fra and Lyd, Mary's younger sisters, it was no bane but a boon.

It was only to exchange embarrassments at home for retrenchments abroad ; only to quit a tumble-down ancient house, never at its best great or pretentious. But long before a brick of it was laid, the Carterets had been one of the three or four families—the names of which were still to be met with in county history, and that had shared between them the shire. And the last was now to relinquish its remnant of influence, and disappear from the parish register of the day, leaving every mossy tree, tottering park wall, and stagnant ditch boundary, as well as every

centre of manufacturing enterprise and modern improvement to the trust of a race of newcomers.

The middle-aged squire of 'The Warren' was not selling the acres that were left him. These remained the only provision for his wife's annuity and his daughters' doweries, as well as the burdened succession of his eldest son. He was merely letting the home farm to save it from utter impoverishment, in consequence of his inability to drain and manure, trench and top-dress, what he had retained in his own hands, and at the same time to keep up the most frugal establishment that a poor, far-descended country squire could reduce himself to, without his wife and daughters bearing testimony to his sin against his family and his order, in this country of commercial wealth, luxurious living, and ostentatious pretension.

Like Mary, in desiring the impossible change of the spotless laburnum blossoms into guineas, soiled with the cleaving touch of many hands, it was in disinterested consideration for the old family place, as well as for his children, that Mr. Carteret prepared to alienate himself for life from what, next to Mary, was the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart.

At the same time, it was only the comparatively blank fields and moor that he let. He was saved the torture of transferring the house, with its human associations and memory-haunted rooms,

to any occupants less intelligent and respectful than the old gardener and his wife, who were to occupy the lower flat, to air and warm what was already mouldy and chill, and to keep together and care for the antique and nearly worn-out furniture. It was long since a modern library table or new piano had come to 'The Warren,' on which Mrs. Carteret persisted on setting store in a money sense, but which the Squire in his heart knew was of little intrinsic value except to its owners.

In fact, the house was far too old-fashioned and inconvenient, while it did not in itself belong to so remote a period as to be venerable, and therefore romantic, to figure as a desirable residence for a tenant even in the catalogue of a land-agent.

Yet it is often to these stuffy, shabby, out-of-date dwellings, with their grounds heinously stiff or wildly overgrown, which a man may have occupied and unaccountably prided himself on for the better part of his life, and which he has been accustomed to look upon as one with his people—palpitating with their life, stirred by their breath—since the reign of the first Georges or Queen Anne at least, that wilful human affections cling till the heart-strings crack in an enforced severance.

Mary Carteret was employing some of the overabundance of leisure, against which she rebelled, to walk all over the old place again, and take from numerous favourite points the last fond looks,

the recollection of which she was never with her own consent to part from.

She was alone; for nobody would have sympathised with her save her father. In this case the sympathy was keen and deep; while, as Mary herself humbly confessed, the anguish of the man, with his longer date of possession and his more entire proprietorship, was more poignant. It was also mingled with bitter self-reproach for the loss of opportunities which, as they had never come to Mary, she could not mourn over. The two—father and daughter—who had much in common, and had been accustomed to share their interests, instinctively avoided each other in the spending of those last days, and in the entertaining of those last regards which were all that were left them, and with respect to which they felt justly that here communion would only be the enhancement of sorrow. Mary was shy of intruding on her father's regrets, for she had an intuitive comprehension that, acute and severe as were her own, there was all the difference, between her lamentation and his, that there can be between a young, fearless, buoyant woman, who has life and hope before her, and an elderly and broken-down man, who has little to expect from this world, and who is convinced that he is all but done with it.

Mary had got over the earliest self-confident, somewhat uncharitable conclusion to which she had been driven—‘Oh, if I had been

Regy or Tom, I would have prevented this; I would have stood in the breach; I would have so demeaned myself at Cambridge and Oxford, reading law and divinity, that we—that papa—should never have been compelled to quit the dear old Warren, and go abroad to vegetate or rust for the rest of his days, though papa is too manly and good to do that; but small thanks to the boys for it.’ Mary had come to the more becoming and subdued frame of mind, of considering that what was past was over. Where was the good of bearing a grudge against one’s own, and one’s younger brothers, by whose side Mary had always felt well advanced in sobriety and years? Poor Regy and Tom would be sorry for the moment—bootless as the sorrow would be, and speedily effaced by the next occupation or amusement which fell in the lads’ way—when they heard in their far-away, wide-apart shanties, that life had come to an exodus at the Warren.

Mary was likewise saved from that curious baffling by commonplace contradictions and impertinent interruptions—some of them with a mockingly ludicrous side—which so often perplex and mortify men and women, when they have made, as they are prone to do, a preconceived, while perfectly honest, programme of sentiment as well as of situation.

Mary was suffered, even by her own conscience—for the family preparations for departure were all

completed betimes, and Mrs. Carteret permitted no interference with her arrangements, to loiter and linger over saying good-bye to the home of her predecessors, and her own home hitherto.

No obtrusive friend by habit, though there were necessarily many such, no late acquaintance intruded to distract Mary's mind and claim her attention. Not even a rush of bewildering jarring recollections, utterly foreign to present circumstances, or of tyrannical, premature considerations borrowed from the future, and already involving much of the violent change that the future would bring, interfered with Mary's parting strolls and wistful gaze, in this direction or in that. She was almost as quiet, engrossed, and touched as she had intended to be—which is saying a good deal. It was not quite the same as she had anticipated, of course; nothing is altogether so. This flower she had counted on was not in blossom; that bird was not in tune; the terrier Ross barked out of season; the very absence of her father was a great disturbing experience: still the reality was as near to imagination as could reasonably be looked for, and there was some soothing influence in the correspondence.

Mary had walked down the laburnum avenue, as she had projected. She was glad, not sorry, that she did so, as the early summer and the trees were in their perfection, on a changeable but sweet May day, when there were dappled clouds soften-

ing, but not shading, the wonderful golden arbours resounding with mellow song of thrush and black-bird, shrill piping of finch and linnet, and blithe titter of sparrow, through which she took her slow way. What other gold of time, and talents, and heart's content, might she not have spent, or spared, or prodigally wasted, before that living gold again dropped lovingly on the brown head, which she bared to feel it? A pattering, passing shower fell, and behold the gold was shining and glittering in the returning sunshine, as if fresh from God's own mint of creation.

Mary went on, gathering in her skirts, and threading easily the prickly labyrinth beyond, which had been a grievance to her mother, and which Mrs. Carteret had thought might have had its reward, had it led to any place that she visited less seldom than the moor. Yet the moor was not desolate to Mary; the only thing desolate in it, by a paradox, was the old keeper's cottage, still inhabited by his widow, with its wreath of dim blue smoke rising and hovering over the mass of green. The broom and gorse, though in blossom, looked faint and flavourless so far as colour was concerned, with their sprinkling of pale gold over their russet and dark green, after the blaze of the laburnum; but they rested the eyes, and proved a sliding scale to the gloom of the wood. Not that the trees were all sombre, though they were principally firs; there were gay green glades of which

Mary knew, beyond the path, where there were ancient birches, beeches, and oaks, haunts of owls, starlings, and tom-tits. There were plenty of huge apple-green, straw-coloured, and umber-brown brackens; there were patches of heather and red ling in the wood, as well as on the outskirts of the moor. There had been abundance of roe-deer, as well as pheasants and partridges, once on a day, though not in Mary's time.

She could remember gay picnics there, when the boys were still at home, and before they had lost their promise, when they brought college chums to share their vacation, and when the country houses in the rather thinly-populated neighbourhood round, happened to have their full complement of girl inmates. Mary used to speed busily to and from the wood and moor and the house, by the laburnum avenue, many times, in the pleasant preparation for these feasts, and before the shooting parties, in whose honour and for whose refreshment they were inaugurated, came up to profit by them.

These rites and ceremonies were always under her mother's punctilious supervision; Mary was never allowed to introduce any departure from rule, any novelty of freedom or simplicity, which might have struck her as more befitting the occasion. And the boys had called her an old woman always, while she had certainly felt, even in her teens, like a maiden aunt at least beside her

brothers. Mary had enjoyed the picnics, nevertheless, in her own way, and she looked back upon the enjoyment tenderly, as has been shown.

Mary came round from the wood by crossing a field bordered with blackberries, now lilac-budded and shelly-white with blossom, and getting into the short straight avenue of English elms and ash trees, unfurnished with a lodge, or even with a gate, which led directly to the house. She went first round to the gardens, which were a characteristic feature of the Warren. They were old flower and vegetable gardens, somewhat faded and dim, like everything else about the place. White roses and white raspberries predominated over red. There seemed a certain colourlessness and homeliness of fragrance in the jumble of dusky carnation, wan lily, and purple-blue convolvulus, with sharp lavender and still more pungent rose-mary—after the flaming scarlet and yellow, blue and purple riband borders, softened by whole columns of neutral-tinted, statuesque house-leeks, with the mellow heliotropes and verbenas of modern gardens.

But the Warren gardens were very sweet and delicate, with an unapproachable grace to Mary, and not the least charm was the broad grass walks which Mrs. Carteret regarded as an unmitigated nuisance, and which would have been snares of damp after wet weather, had not the gardens themselves hung, like those of Babylon, on a terraced slope, at the foot of which ran a clear little

stream, once held extremely convenient to the gardener. This stream, leaving the garden, traversed a tiny dell among hollies and willows, where there were the earliest primroses, and where the brook line was to be found larger and bluer than in any other spot that Mary had discovered in the country. She suspected the wild flowers might wither and rot now unmolested, for the old gardener and his wife would not care to pull them, though they might still gather and store in drawers and cupboards, till they fell to fragrant dust, the sweet violets. The last grew as they had grown when Mary, a child, filled her lap full of them, moist with dew, many a morning, in the long rows beside the sunny wall, where the rosy-red and death-white stock grew next them, and just before the wall made the nook which sheltered the great bed of lily of the valley.

Mary pursued her wanderings to the blossoming orchard and to the paddock devoted to the rearing of pheasants in hen-coops, with a sentry-box in the middle for the keeper, who watched for and drove off the hawks hovering over their prey. The paddock was still an animated scene, with its broods of young birds speckled like ripe field peas, scurrying here and there. But the kennels beyond had been for some time deserted, save by the old house dog 'Worry,' which strained his chain to reach Mary, and lick her hand as his final homage.

At last she came in front of the house, and stood on the little lawn, and by the familiar scene close at hand, to imprint a version of it on her brain, as Mary Tudor would have had Calais written on her heart. Nothing of a house to impartial and yet ignorant observers, looking quite small, though Mary was aware it managed to conceal marvels of accommodation—such as the accommodation was. A red house, faced with grey, rising into a three-cornered peak, crowned with three urns rather than pinnacles, and pierced by one round eye of a window. Beneath, on a stone let in for the purpose, the engraved initial letters ‘H. C.’ and ‘C. B.,’ for Harry Cartaret and Carola Bennet, the husband and wife standing midway among Mary’s progenitors, and under whose still moderately prosperous and hopeful auspices the foundation-stone had been laid, and the roof-tree about to be forsaken added, at the date recorded, 1703.

The little lawn was very small, and was so encumbered by great bushes and trees, altogether out of proportion to its size, that there was no more than a clear opening for the rent weather-stained stone sun-dial which stood opposite the entrance. There were a bristling and a drooping pine, recent intruders on the crowded oval sward. But the great permanent obstructions were a huge old walnut and a wild cherry tree

which Mary would not have missed for the world.

Mary stepped indoors like the ghost of herself on an extraordinary errand, did not pause in the little hall, with its squares of black and white marble, its native stags' horns, and its tiny round closet for gun-cases, but proceeded through the low-roofed, thick-walled rooms in turn.

The dining-room, on the ground floor, was a dark room even on a May day, and had window recesses to side windows capable of holding a single isolated chair with its occupant.

There was not one spacious staircase, but several little winding stairs leading in the first place to narrow winding lobbies, and ultimately to whole suites of small bedrooms, some of which Mary never remembered to have seen occupied. They were consecrated to ancient inhabitants, and continued to bear names long out of the world, save on mouldering gravestones. Here was the 'Governor's room,' when the 'Governor' was no slang term, but was applied in sober earnest to a Carteret who had pushed his fortunes abroad, played the king in some West Indian island, and been content to return and own a seat at his brother's or his nephew's hospitable table. It was one of the best bachelors' rooms in the family house, though with hardly less limitation than the six feet of space in the family vault. And this was

‘Lady Lucy’s room,’ a memorial that a Carteret, within a century and a half, had wedded an earl’s daughter, and brought her home to leave her mark on the habitation.

Mary turned the keys in the doors of these deserted rooms. Mrs. Carteret in her spirit of conservatism and well-bred housewifery, so took order that while the rooms were aired and cared for, their original contents remained undisturbed. Mary could handle gingerly Lady Lucy’s painted workbasket with her ladyship’s last piece of tambour work—the tambour needle rusted in its stitch lying in it. She could draw out the special drawer in the Governor’s chest which contained his official suit, knee breeches and all, and his state vest of yellow and white satin. These garments, in spite of Mrs. Carteret’s supremacy and ubiquity, had not escaped sacrilege. Mary could recall acting charades in her mother’s absence, when Regy and Tom had defied all precedent, and pulled out the Governor’s small clothes and his very state vest to serve their ends and every appropriate purpose to which the ancient garments could be turned.

The drawing-room, like the other living-rooms, held only a few traces of former generations among the dominant necessities of life to the present proprietors; but growing scarcity of means had kept the last within bounds, and even rendered their goods ancient in succession. As has been said,

Mrs. Carteret, who in her conservatism yet loved all conventional improvements, had to deny herself every acquisition with mysterious title of 'What-not' or 'Davenport;' while the girls still used their mother's grand piano, and their piles of music were, as Fra complained indignantly, largely made up of school pieces. How could they help it, when it took their allowances of pocket-money—which, as their mother told them, had kept her in her maiden days, and all their excellent aunts on the mother's side, in gowns and bonnets—to buy gloves and ribands? As for Mr. Carteret's books and newspapers, which had once reflected impartially every shade of political opinion, and of enterprise of accredited editor, and author of magazine and pamphlet, and which had served to litter both library and drawing-room—these too had dwindled down to the 'Times' and the 'Quarterly.'

Thus there remained resting places for specimens of the luxury and taste of individuals who had died, most of them, before Mrs. Carteret was born.

There was a case of miniatures, representing languishing ladies with powder in their hair, and fierce gentlemen with ruffles round their tapering hands, on a gilt ground in one frame, and very few of the originals of which even Mr. Carteret could name.

There was a cup set in silver with the date 1536.

There was an inlaid cabinet, introduced there when such cabinets were ordinary movable cupboards, and when there was no such thing as a curiosity shop, with its exorbitant prices, answering to the rage for mundane relics.

There were china mugs, which if Mr. Carteret had been foreseeing, he would have sent up to one of Christie and Manson's sales, and sold before the china mania had suddenly expired like other manias.

There were hand screens, in an elegant lack-a-daisical style, proofs of the feebly graceful accomplishments of earlier daughters of the house ; and there was still lying among books, of a different and much more sober and work-a-day letter and spirit, a copy of ' Lallah Rookh ' in costly binding, which had belonged to the maiden aunt from whom, and not from his father, Mr. Carteret had inherited the Warren.

Side by side with these vestiges of the past, were Mrs. Carteret's carefully cherished wedding gifts of silver *épergne*, rather rickety, her china vases—Sèvres instead of Chelsea—her hand-screens and books.

Mr. Carteret's watercolour sketches, taken when he was a young man and had leisure and heart for such pursuits, and his books, were there, jostling Mary's books, bracket-bag and portfolio. And there was still room for Fra and Lyd's heterogeneous possessions, ranging from fitfully

attended to, dropsical fern cases, to nets for the last lawn game to be played on a lawn of several acres in extent, and shorn bare of its very daisies.

Mary saw them all at a glance; and then she tried, through a gathering mist before her eyes, to see each thing separately. Failing in that attempt, she went upstairs and stood at her own little room window, and said to herself, ‘Now, I have looked at it all deliberately for the first and last time. I cannot look at each separate particle of the dust that is dear to papa and me, and carry away the remembrance of every atom; though I should like to do that. I will be reasonable, and go out in peace.’

CHAPTER II.

MRS. PENFEATHER'S ESTIMATE OF MARY.

‘My dear, you do not know the responsibility, and, I may say, the trial, involved in having one of the best of husbands, and dear good children. No doubt it is hard to lose a husband as you have lost yours, and to be not only a widow, but childless; still I do not think it is heartless to hold that there are compensations for the greatest deprivations. I can assure you, Celia, that with all the respect and regard in the world for Mr. Carteret, and with all a mother’s—I hope not a careless mother’s—feelings for my boys and girls, that they often worry me almost beyond bearing. Of course, I should not confess it to everybody, only to an old friend like you, who can sympathise with my troubles.’

The speaker was Mrs. Carteret, and she made the amazingly egotistical and paradoxical statement in perfectly good faith. The listener was Mrs. Penfeather, and she was saying to herself, ‘A widow and childless that can sympathise with the troubles of a wife who possesses the best of hus-

bands, and is the mother of good children—what a marvel she must think me ! What could I have done in our nonage to warrant so extravagant an opinion ? ’

Mrs. Carteret was a formal, neat little woman, in her chocolate *moiré*, with her blue velvet and Honiton lace headdress. The costume was somewhat costly to begin with, but in her case it was lasting. She did not care to vary her fashion ; and she was to be seen dressed for dinner in that grave suitable strain to the utmost term of existence of a *moiré* or of Honiton lace ; then perhaps the chocolate would be replaced by an olive green gown of a similar fabric, capped by the Honiton lace, relieved by lilac or pink velvet.

She was so formal and so neat in her manners and habits, that she seriously impaired her undoubted claims as a woman of good birth and breeding. Strangers had been heard to question whether Mrs. Carteret had not risen from the ranks of trade at least—she was so burdened with punctiliousness—and to remark that there was a faint reflection of the milliner’s block in her invariably unruffled and elegant plumes. But the result was caused by the nature of the woman, not by any conscious inferiority of origin or education.

She retained considerable remnants of a bright eyed, small featured, clear coloured prettiness ; though those were marred by the contracted

character of the face, which was more and more observable as years were pinching it in their turn, by the frettingly anxious knit of the brows and obstinate twist of the mouth, which had become the settled position of the features.

Mrs. Penfeather had not been so handsome as her friend at starting, and foreign climates and ill-health had rendered her emaciated to the bone and bleached to pallor. Still the exaggerated framework of the angular figure, in its easy outline—so far as it depended on drapery, and the lividness of the face, where a certain tried self-possession and serene repose prevailed, were not without the power of pleasing.

The Carterets had not entirely escaped from social aggravations as the time for their departure from ‘The Warren’ drew near; though Mrs. Carteret, finding her husband inflexible, had done what she could to bring down to a minimum the round of farewell dinners; and Mr. Carteret had doggedly refused becoming the principal party to any private or public demonstration, in whatever light it might greet him, whether as Justice of Peace and squire, or man and brother.

‘Why should they feast and bespatter me with compliments and gifts?’ he asked, in his hasty, abrupt way. ‘Let them keep them for a better man. I have not been able to check, in my own family, tendencies which, in their coarse, brutal fruit—though with far more excuse for the rank

growth, I condemned on the bench. I have not been able to do what I might as a landlord; my tenants, servants, and neighbours have all suffered in different degrees by my incapacity. I am relinquishing perforce the estate to which I was called, as a bad job so far as I am concerned; if I had been a wiser and a better man I might have retained it. It would be a gross imposition and humbug to tax the country to furnish me with puffs and presents.'

But, within the last week, an old friend and schoolfellow of Mrs. Carteret's came back to England, after a quarter of a century's absence, without her husband—a naval officer who had been drowned by the accidental capsizing of a boat when his frigate lay off the African coast—or her brother—a veteran high up in the East India Company's service, to whom she had gone after her widowhood, and with whom she had stayed, presiding over his household, till the rebellion broke out and he perished, while she was saved by a hairbreadth escape.

Later she had resided, to suit her health and finances, in cheap, quiet quarters in Italy and Southern France and Germany. At last she had returned to England, feeling so much of a stranger and so destitute of near ties, that she had forced herself by an effort to recall her favourite schoolfellow, whom she had been wont to visit for months at a time after the two young ladies were

released from school, and whose bridesmaid she had been when Mrs. Carteret had married, three or four years before Mrs. Penfeather.

Mrs. Penfeather laid hold of this slender link to her former world, requested to be reinstated in an intercourse which had died a natural death when Mary Carteret was in long clothes, and offered, if it were convenient, to pay another visit, after so wide a gap, to 'The Warren.'

The time was highly inconvenient; but one of Mrs. Carteret's sterling qualities was constancy, and constancy of a literal, one-ideaed sort. She was ready to welcome her old friend, and extend to her the warmth of a friend's house while Mrs. Carteret had an English house to offer, at whatever sacrifice of her own plans and views.

It was Mrs. Penfeather's regret and annoyance at having been the unwitting means of placing herself and others in an awkward position, and her determination of purpose, which produced a modification in the arrangements. Mrs. Penfeather lodged at the little school-house in the neighbouring village of Cleve, and only walked up to dinner at 'The Warren,' in place of being a resident in the house.

Mrs. Penfeather had now come to dinner, and was being of what use she could to her hostess. She was sitting in her best black silk and Indian shawl to show that she treated the occasion with due honour. She was probably diverting Mrs. Carteret's

mind from those cares of which she complained, or at least lessening their burden by becoming their recipient, even while Mrs. Penfeather entered her private protest of the inequality which had been established between the women, and therefore of her incapacity to fill again, as satisfactorily as formerly, the long vacated post of her friend's confidante.

As for Mrs. Carteret, she was not disturbed by any doubts of Mrs. Penfeather's comprehension of and concern for her trials. She was one of those women whose private experiences bulk so largely in their minds, that the notes in their own eyes monopolise the faculties of vision, and they cannot so much as see the beams barring their neighbours' eyes.

'But surely my god-daughter Mary is a great comfort to you,' said Mrs. Penfeather, feeling that she had come from the wilderness, and out of the depths, to encourage the friend whose lines had been cast in pleasant places all these fateful years.

'Ah! well, it was just about Mary that I was going to consult you, Celia. We shall always be Celia and Fanny to each other, shall we not?' asked Mrs. Carteret, affectionately. She was a woman of strong, though somewhat undisciplined and unbalanced affections; and yet discipline was the foundation of her life.

'I think we shall,' returned Mrs. Penfeather, with composed and still sufficing assurance.

Then Mrs. Carteret drew a sigh of superior and harassed wisdom. 'Mary is unlike the generality of girls, unlike what I was at her age. I do not quite know what to make of her, and I do not relish such puzzles.'

'I am afraid you cannot prevent them, Fanny,' said Mrs. Penfeather.

'I never see them turn out well,' continued Mrs. Carteret, with involuntary sharpness, from the sharp timbre that had crept into her always thin voice; 'one does not wish a girl to be a prodigy, not to say an oddity. It may answer with a boy, and it might have pleased Mr. Carteret if our poor boys had been prodigies,' she added, with an impatient betrayal of the sorest spot in her heart, 'but it never suits with a girl.'

'In what way is Mary a prodigy, may I ask?' enquired Mrs. Penfeather.

'Oh! I don't blame Mary herself,' exclaimed Mrs. Carteret, going off instantly in another direction; 'please don't misunderstand my words,' with a suspicion of irritability which reminded Mrs. Penfeather of the days when Fanny Lucas had been the best behaved and at the same time the touchiest girl in Ash Lodge School. 'It is all her father's doing, and it is because he would bring her forward, and have her with him when she was a mere baby of a girl; you know, Celia, how wilful as well as how good Mr. Carteret is, and what hobbies he rides. Mary was the

first child in the family, so he would spoil her as far as he could, by bringing her forward and making a companion of her even after Regy and Tom were born and grown into fine little fellows who might have served his purpose. The consequence is that Mary has grown up, not a boisterous bouncing tomboy—I flatter myself that could not have happened with my daughter while I was with her—but not without a kind of rude hardness—I cannot call it anything else—and self-reliance, and full of opinions and notions on subjects that other girls neither know nor care about. I am in perfect horror for her taking up some women’s rights question, or proposing to enter on a career as they call it. It must be of trade now, as her father has no longer funds to qualify her for a profession, or to pay her electioneering expenses, if women ever be permitted to enter Parliament,’ finished Mrs. Carteret with a dash of sarcasm.

‘I hope you are overestimating the dangers.’ Her companion sought to soothe the irate and alarmed lady, while Mrs. Penfeather was going back in her disengaged mind into the shadowy past, and trying to draw from it any indications or explanations of the present state of affairs.

‘Mr. Carteret was not wilful, though he had a mind of his own and could stand to it, when I knew him,’ reflected the umpire, ‘and it was not he who was one-ideacd, but Fanny. At that time

he was all in all with her, though there was a dawning rival to his autocracy in this very Mary. Fanny used to bore her husband a little with her attentions and her solicitude—for it was always her way to be solicitous about anybody she cared for—notwithstanding that theirs was a love marriage, and he was sincerely attached to her then. I dare say he is so still, under the rough surface of everyday use, and of the hard lines of wear and tear, and of feeling himself worsted in the world. He was too upright a man not to value her dutifulness, and Fanny was always the essence of duty according to her light. She was as steadfast, poor soul, as a rock, and she is not changed. There she sits, the very same woman as when she was exercised in her mind about Gerty Philpot's copying her sum, or Miss Babberton, the junior governess, making eyes at the last curate. I can remember when John Carteret thought Fanny the most charming little precisian within these bounds. I dare say he holds still that she is a very good sort of a woman, and that it was not the heaviest misfortune which has befallen him when she crossed his path. But I can comprehend that, when he first began to be staggered by the want of that companionship which his wife could never give him, he was induced to turn to his little daughter and try to mould her to his needs. Fanny was just the woman to resent unconsciously the preference, and be rendered jealous of her own child

as an interloper between her and her husband. Perhaps—who knows?—she started an opposition faction when the next baby, the son and heir, came; any way, she was certain to exaggerate his importance, and to make him take the first place, though she would not forget his sister's rights. I have heard that both the boys have turned out fairly ill; that is, as ill as could have been expected if they were nothing out of the common, while they were made hothouse plants of by Fanny, and, as a corrective, neglected or bullied by their father, and when all the time they had inherited their share of the father and mother's uprightness to hold them back from wanton profligacy or utter worthlessness. Then there are the two younger girls, the last grown up treasures, to fill the vacancy which the expatriation of her sons has left in Fanny's aching heart. I know she does not acknowledge their failure; only their father, though an excellent man, was hard upon, and fortune was against the young men. Well, probably their father had too much to do to interfere with the younger girls' rearing, and to decoy them from the safe and level paths of vain and frivolous girlhood—shall I be harsh enough to call it? He is content with having suborned Mary; and very likely she is an eccentric, aggressive, disagreeable young woman, amply warranting her mother's lamentations.'

Just when Mrs. Penfeather arrived at this stage

of her meditations, she was aroused and overcome by the flattery of Mrs. Carteret's earnest protest, 'If you had only come home sooner, Celia, or if we had not been relinquishing our old life—you cannot think the shock it has been to me to give it up, but I feel more and more strengthened for my duty when I find how much I have to do, and lend myself to each requirement as it comes—you might have been such a help to me; you might have persuaded Mr. Carteret to be more patient with the boys ('as if you could have endured any persuasion save your own to influence your husband,' put in Mrs. Penfeather, in a private note of remonstrance). He would have had them men before they were major ('and if the child is not father to the man, what chance is there for the man?') Mrs. Penfeather still made a safety valve for her convictions by following out her private line of argument); you might have been of the greatest use to Mary. I have so much to think of and arrange; there is never a moment's rest or relaxation for the mother of a grown-up family and the mistress of a country house, which last burden used to be enough for me, you remember? when I was a young head of a household twenty years ago. But I shall soon be free from that charge,' she added, with quick ruefulness belying her words. 'I have had no time to devote myself to Mary, and win her from becoming singular and conspicuous, which will be entirely

the result of her having been so much with her father, and of his humouring her in the idle fancy that she can help him with his farming and accounts. Nonsense!’ broke off Mrs. Carteret, abruptly, ‘how can a girl help a man except in keeping out of his way, or in amusing him when he is hipped, in addition to being modest and dutiful in her behaviour—not teasing him for seasons in town or for the house full in autumn, or not getting ill inappropriately and having to be sent to the seaside when the family have no need of fresh expenses. I could have depended on you, Celia, as on myself; you would have shown Mary what it is to be womanly and keep within bounds, and I believe you might have impressed on the child—a dear, generous girl all the time, remember—how to preserve at once her dignity, delicacy, and womanliness all unimpaired.’

‘Mercy on me!’ murmured Mrs. Penfeather, almost audibly; ‘I feel like a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Fanny is measuring me by the outline which existed when I was a shy demure girl. What would she think of me if she knew of the deeds I have done since I saw her last? I went out all alone with a company of black men—I could get no others at the time, and it was not because of them that I wondered my feet could carry me—to learn from a shipmate the minutest particulars of the manner in which my Hugh met his end. When the rebellion broke out at other

stations in India, I left our own compost one night after midnight, unaccompanied even by my ayah, since the woman was not to be trusted, and made my way to the Major's bungalow at the opposite end of the English quarter in order to carry him a message, which saved him—the most unpopular man in the regiment—from going next morning on parade, when my poor General, who had been like a father to his division, was shot down like a dog by the sepoy. Then I had to flee for my worthless life in company with a doctor and a lieutenant, a sergeant and four private soldiers, but with not another woman in the company. We were three weeks on the road. I cooked what food we could procure, and I washed what rags we had kept, with not a man that did not treat me as he would have treated his own mother and sister, only there was not much room for conventional distance and reserve between us. I suppose my perceptions and standards were sensibly impaired; for in Italy and France, afterwards, when there was less excuse for it, I have been called in by the village landlord of an *osteria* and an *auberge* to settle a dispute; and I have spoken up on my own account, and scolded a cruel donkey driver in a crowded marketplace. What an imposition I must be, not to carry my misdeeds, which Fanny never inquires into, on my face, and so prevent her from trusting me in this implicit and outrageous fashion!’

Mary came into the room and was introduced to Mrs. Penfeather, to the interruption of the conversation.

Mrs. Penfeather was agreeably surprised to find her accused god-daughter a brown-haired blooming girl, in a girl's dinner dress of white muslin and blue ribbons. She stopped short however of blue stockings, and there was not a suspicion about her of the soil and stain of labour and independence, whether in ink spots, in dust patches, or in bold and contradictory tone and bearing.

If there was anything in which Mary Carteret differed from other girls as far as Mrs. Penfeather's preinformed and speculative eyes could detect, it was in the greater softness and consideration for others that was born of her greater thoughtfulness and deeper sense of responsibility.

Mary, on her part, approached Mrs. Penfeather with the mingled longing and shrinking with which men and women who have gone through exceptional trials are apt to inspire sensitive young persons. The longing had predominated in Mary's case. Therefore the disillusion had been all the greater when she found that Mrs. Penfeather, whose young sailor husband had been drowned within the first year of their marriage, and who had been in the heat of a terrible mutiny in which her only brother and sole surviving relation had fallen, was in externals just such a still, nicely mannered woman as Mary might have imagined

any favourite juvenile companion of her mother's would have become. Mary could not distinguish at the first sight the faintest indication of the tragedy queen about Mrs. Penfeather, and, as she did not pause to consider how much out of place the character would have been in the Warren drawing-room at this date, she simply felt vexed by the omission.

Fra and Lyd would have entertained no vexation of the kind, supposing they had not gone away on a farewell visit to some girls of their own age in the next country house. They were not in the least sorry to miss Mrs. Penfeather's arrival. Seen or unseen there was no halo about her to them. They belonged to the hard, levelling, rather than to the yawning, pooh-poohing school into which a section of young England has descended. A widow who had been left a widow within a year of her wifhood, and who had borne the full brunt of the Indian rebellion, was very little more to the young inexperienced girls than any other widow or woman. She was almost certain to be old-fashioned and tiresome, strait-laced and fidgety, like others of mamma's old friends ; very probably she was also lazy and imperious as many Anglo-Indians showed themselves. That was all they knew about it. Indeed the young girls were very glad to have the chance of missing so much of Mrs. Penfeather's visit.

Mary took up some elaborate embroidery.

‘I see you sew, Mary,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, thrown off her guard.

‘I should think I do,’ replied Mary, in her wonder, also surprised into a strong exclamation. ‘I am not so devoted to our sewing machine, though I can work it with tolerable success, as to be incapable of using a needle. I am fond of embroidery. I like to sit and plan how it will turn out, to exercise my taste in the selection of materials, colours, and stitches, and then to plod on at what can be made of them. I am often tempted to sit whole mornings and evenings over such work.’

‘You don’t despise it, then?’ questioned Mrs. Penfeather.

‘I hope not,’ answered Mary, opening her eyes, and speaking a little gravely, and then a recollection forced her to laugh. ‘Fra and Lyd despise it in these later days; they were once engrossed with it, but they have begun to think that it is only fit for hum-drum elderly women and small creatures, and beneath the attention of girls of spirit and soul. They are fresh from school,’ she added quickly, as an explanation of, and apology for, any shortcoming of wisdom which she had betrayed in her sisters.

‘Come, you are not altogether spoilt for a woman,’ thought Mrs. Penfeather.

The next surprise which Mary afforded Mrs. Penfeather was by the repressed enthusiasm with

which she began to speak of a novel that Mrs. Penfeather found lying on a table and took up and made a remark upon.

‘You read novels too,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, with a slight smile.

‘I should think I do,’ said Mary, insensible of repeating herself in the emphatic phrase that was not habitual with her, and in the puzzled stare by which it was accompanied. ‘Papa and mamma never made any objection to novels as novels. I have enjoyed them all my life, and I don’t stick in even the stupider books which Fra and Lyd throw aside after a glance. Somehow, they gallop through the best, and call novels slow which are only too entrancing to me; that is when the girls speak of books at all, for I can’t tell you why, but books don’t make enough impression upon their minds to induce Fra and Lyd to discuss the very stories which have interested them. The girls complain of me for being guilty of affectation in talking of heroes and heroines as if they were real men and women, and I say how can I help it? I think they will be more real to my sisters when they have gone a little farther beyond the small world of school, and when they are better able for comparison and reflection,’ finished Mary hopefully.

‘Upon my word I do not see what Fanny has to cry out about in Mary,’ recorded Mrs. Penfeather on her mental tablets; ‘she appears to me as

tamely domestic, and at the same time as impulsive and imaginative—as much in danger of being led away by her dreams and feelings, as a girl ought to be. I suppose Fanny would not have her calculating and worldly. There is a shade of unusual simplicity and candour, of tolerance acquired from her father, no doubt, and of fidelity in speaking of her sisters as they are, while she is prompted to defend them—but that is about all which is odd in the girl.’

During dinner Mrs. Penfeather had further opportunities for observation.

The Squire had altered much more in the outward man than his wife had altered in the outward woman. His large frame was overgrown in spite of marks of regular out-of-door exercise, as if inertness were creeping over and buoyancy leaving him; he stooped a good deal, and his chin was apt to rest on his breast after the fashion of much older men. His hair was iron grey, and his eyes had a sunk look in cheeks the brick red firmness of which had become streaked with purple and flabby in flesh. There was no unmanly dejection about him, and he was by no means the man to wear his heart on his sleeve; while Mrs. Penfeather, though she had been an old and valued friend of his wife whom he was disposed to treat with all respect, had naturally not been his companion and confidante. He was not a man, indeed, who had ever had

many intimate associates, men or women, though he had owned a few close and devoted friends. His attainments, such as they were, had rather removed him from his immediate set. He had led a comparatively retired and isolated life, and was a man to whom localities and habits had become specially precious.

It was not difficult to see that this uprooting and transplanting of the Squire of the Warren, after he was well up in years, from the scenes and the occupations which had been the great resources of his life, was like entering upon the same process with reference to a tree that had passed its full growth.

At the same time Mr. Carteret was exerting himself to entertain Mrs. Penfeather as a guest whom he held in esteem. His manner had always been, apart from its company side, courteous, kindly, and indulgent to his wife and to all his household, even while he was by temperament free spoken, and impelled by what was original and able in the man, to say a thing to the point and in season, whether it were generally or individually acceptable or not.

Mrs. Penfeather remarked the different ways of the household with the lively interest of an entirely disengaged woman, whose sympathies, in spite of the large demands which had been made on them on her own account, and notwithstanding what she said of herself, were fresh as in the days

of her youth as only a clever, warm hearted woman can retain fresh sympathies. She did not distinguish any change in Mr. Carteret's tone to his wife, unless that subtle change which was conveyed in his involuntarily turning to Mary for an intelligent response whenever the talk passed beyond old reminiscences, household concerns or neighbourly gossip.

It was not that Mrs. Carteret was incapable of conversing on anything besides, but that her interest was languid and her opinions inevitably opposed to those of her husband. She could not see that the Palestine Exploration or the Arctic Expedition were anything save a waste of life and property when we still held and believed our Bibles, and when there was not even a possibility of fresh channels for commerce to be opened up within the Polar Seas. She did not approve of the Board Schools, when her late father the Rector's schools, which had done good service, as she could testify, in their day, were still in existence. Army reform, with scores of old county men and cousins in the army by purchase, was specially distasteful to her; and she looked upon vote by ballot as quite un-English and altogether unmanly.

When the *avant-coureurs* of such questions had been last approached at the Warren dinner table in Mrs. Penfeather's hearing, Mr. Carteret had been too young a man and too busy with his

personal engagements to do more than theorise upon principles which were then only rising above the horizon, though even at that time, as Mrs. Penfeather had a dim remembrance, he would make a sudden trenchant observation which would set her—a raw young woman—thinking a little.

In those days Mary was a child in arms, fit only to smile, pout and play bo-peep over her father's shoulder. Now she sat there fair in her temporary gravity and sweet in her honest large-heartedness and large-mindedness—a reflection of her father's own best endowments. In addition she had the intense desire, which belonged more to her womanliness, to enter into the experience of another, and to reach after him in his conclusions, in order to form independent conclusions of her own—seeing that she had neither the disposition nor had she received the rearing which would have qualified her to serve merely as a softer, fainter echo of her father.

Mrs. Penfeather could not wonder that the speaker — too well convinced of the hopeless irresponsiveness of the lady at the head of the table opposite him, should, without the slightest household treachery, even without any deliberate intention, in the mere requirements of social intercourse, have had recourse to that other listener, who answered so surely and so pleasantly and as fully as her sex and youth would admit, to every appeal of his. This was true not merely on

great national topics, which, to be sure, bulk far too largely to be admitted freely and frequently within the limits of a family dinner table, but on those trivial, yet to the master of the house important enough personal affairs, about which Mrs. Carteret had long forgotten to care. She had been monopolised by her own common round and daily task. It was to Mary that Mr. Carteret glanced when he referred to an interview with his new tenant and an opinion of his lawyer, as when he dealt with public news further off and of wider import.

In the meantime Mrs. Carteret was borne away on her own separate undercurrent of talk at intervals, and of thought always, on cook and Mary Jane, Richard and William, who were to be parted from, and nurse and James, who were to be taken with the family, in the breaking-up of the household, on elaborations of packing and illustrations of crossing the Channel with minutest items as to the destination of the travellers. Into all these personal problems Mrs. Carteret had, as was her nature, thrown herself at last with such zeal and self-devotion, that here, as she had said, virtue was its own reward. She had vigour of mind to enter with a positive zest into the dismemberment as well as the reconstruction, under which not only the Squire but Mary sighed and sickened.

It was all the plain result of the persons and their relations. No doubt husbands and wives

in their long tête-à-têtes, beneficial for the most part, have a tendency to assimilate more and more in their cast of thought and feeling; until the very faces, catching the same shades of expression, grow like each other with a harmony that is a little prone to be monotonous. If Mr. and Mrs. Carteret had dwelt alone together on a desert island it is possible that this infectious and imitative faculty might have so dominated as to work the great revolution of either—whether painfully or not—contracting his mind or expanding hers, till they came nearer an equality. But the Warren had not been a desert island; there had been plenty of distractions for both husband and wife to arrest the fusing process; above all there had been an innocent third party who had come between and seriously divided still more the couple joined in wedlock.

Mrs. Penfeather could not blame anybody; yet she was sorry for her old friend, who, in addition to her other trials—though quitting the Warren had been robbed of its sting—must be troubled by, and resentful for what she could neither comprehend nor prevent. And all the time in her heart of hearts she loved both husband and daughter with a true love, which they were quick to acknowledge, though there was a shade of sadness in the acknowledgment.

‘Fra and Lyd will be happy to meet you to-morrow,’ Mrs. Carteret had observed to her

friend, and then she had entered her protest against the abbreviations of her daughters' names. 'I did not give them these titles. I daresay the custom originated with the boys, and was adhered to, as anything short and unmodified finds favour now-a-days. It was not so when we were young, Celia. I shall say nothing for my own everyday name, but is not Celia a more womanly and polished—I shall not say an infinitely more charming—shortening of Cecilia than Ciss, which would be the name applied in the nursery, and descending to the drawing-room, to your grandchild, if you had one, dear?'

'Mrs. Penfeather will excuse me for giving an opinion which I believe I have enunciated of old,' said the Squire, 'that Celia and Delia come too near the Chloe and Daphne order of names. We are too dead in earnest, not to say too commercial, in the nineteenth century for mock pastorals.' Even in the trifle of names there was no correspondence of sentiment between husband and wife.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST GUEST WELCOME AT THE WARREN.

‘ON the whole I am relieved, though it is prolonging an evil,’ said Mr. Carteret, speaking over his opened letters at the breakfast table next morning, ‘that we have all’—and here he glanced with a degree of sedulousness at his wife—‘settled to put off shutting shop and locking the Warren doors, so far as we have to do with them, for another week. Not only must I go over to Sandford for a day or two to take the reckoning there off that poor incapable genius Kit Must’s hands, I find there is a young fellow coming here whom I cannot with a good grace refuse to receive. Taff Penryn of Seabright’s son, Fanny—we must give him such quarters as we can offer for a day or two, till he see those new chemical works at Sandford, which are his attraction. Dabbles in chemicals—a nice dreamy, abstruse inclination, almost as good as going in search of the philosopher’s stone, for a young gentleman with a learned foreign education and out at the elbows as he is. Well, I took up agricultural chemistry in my day and made a con-

siderable mess of it. I need not fling stones at youngsters who have not had a chance to start with,' ended the Squire, with a proud humility in the admission of his own errors of judgment, that was pathetic to one pair of ears hearing him.

'It is very inconvenient having a visitor just now,' said Mrs. Carteret, with unconscious asperity sounding in her tones—much more than in those of her husband, though she was really not so crushed by adverse fortunes—not even by the failure of her sons to redeem these fortunes.

She was still able to see her boys—they were emphatically hers—with a thousand redeeming qualities, and with the chances of their returning fully armed and victorious men in the struggle against gentle poverty in the wilds; while their father only beheld in them two weak lads who had succumbed easily to common temptation, and with regard to whom, as they had done little good here, the best which could be hoped for them was that they would do little harm there.

Even supposing their mother had entertained the same conviction that was an intense mortification to their father, she would have been in a great manner consoled by counterbalancing merits which she would have seen through the strongest magnifying glass. She would have indemnified herself for any wound to her maternal vanity by the delight of still contributing to a large extent

to her children's welfare. There can be few greater joys to a woman like Mrs. Carteret than the sense of being essential to the comfort and pleasure of those she loves. In return for this assurance she will submit cheerfully to almost any amount of care and annoyance. It was her unexpressed feeling that her husband and her eldest daughter had passed beyond her reach and aid, which hurt her where they were concerned.

But Mrs. Carteret's peculiar motherly tenderness to her boys did not render her readily accessible to other young men, neither had its alleviations prevented that quick cutting intonation born of the hurry and worry of life, daily acting and reacting on a narrow intensely conscientious nature. 'I had forgotten that Taff Penryn had any children, or else I believed they were all settled abroad. What can bring this one here at such an awkward time? It is bad enough to have my own old friend Celia Penfeather coming when I cannot make much of her or have the full benefit of her company, though I am sure I am very glad to see her again; but to put up with a strange young fellow, whom nobody knows, disturbing our final arrangements—that is quite too bad.'

'It must be borne with, like the contradiction of Mustapha's proposing to throw me, as an extraordinary variety in his paces, when I rode him in company with his intended purchaser

the other day,' suggested Mr. Carteret, with a suspicion of weariness under his jest.

While Mrs. Carteret had been speaking she had not for a moment entertained the intention of declining to afford the Warren hospitality to this last guest to whom her husband considered it was due. He was master in his own house; she was a faithful wife, to whom disobedience was purely inadmissible. She only used her British privilege, which a woman may share with a man, of vain remonstrance and idle grumbling.

In other circumstances Mr. Carteret would have understood this perfectly; but the times and the man were out of joint; his old landmarks were shifting; his faith in his kinsfolk and fellows beginning to totter. He looked after his wife with some wistfulness when she rose from the table and left the room, not without a dignity of her own, in the middle of her superabundant energy—on the whole a beneficent little figure bent on some one of her many avocations. For, though Mrs. Carteret's faith was not shaken like her husband's for the reason that it had never been very wide, she had not been accustomed to trust to others what she could do herself. She was persuaded that she could best see to the clearing out of the greenhouse, the shutting up of the deserted rooms, the disposing of the housekeeper's stores, the conducting of the extensive correspondence of these last weeks.

‘I hope your mother will make the best of this inappropriate visit; that she will not let young Penryn see that he is *de trop*,’ he trusted himself to say to Mary.

‘You may depend upon it that she will be perfectly gracious to any guest,’ said Mary, a little puzzled by her father’s doubt. ‘Mamma cannot help being substantially kind, though she is so much occupied just now that she is put out by an inappropriate incident. I only wish that she would suffer me to help her, though I should fret her more by my bungling than by my assistance, at first.’

‘The lad comes at an unlucky time for everybody,’ said Mr. Carteret, not paying much attention to what Mary said after the comfort of her first assurance, ‘but I should be vexed if he were made to feel it.’

‘Is he a person of so much importance, papa? I am quite impressed,’ said Mary, with rising interest and returning gaiety, arriving in her own mind at quite a different conclusion from that of her father and mother. It was good that anyone should come for whom her father had the least regard, to take him from the mournfulness of the situation, to divert his attention, were it but for a few hours, into other channels, and to amuse him. Mary could not calculate, with all her love and loyalty, how heavy her father’s mind was, and how little capable it was at this moment of so much

as being bored, which is a feat more easily performed than that of being distracted, while her own youthful spirit could rise at a touch and with a bound from even a tolerably heavy weight.

‘He is of no importance whatever in his own person, though an old Penryn of Seabright was once somebody in the parish,’ answered her father. ‘They went before us; this lad’s father was forced to sell out to the last ground rent. There was no entail with them any more than with us. I don’t know that it would have helped them if there had. I did what I could for the elder Taff Penryn (I see this fellow signs himself Alfred also, and I dare say he is Taff in his turn); he was not old in those days—or, indeed, when he died—but he was beyond being saved.’

‘I have heard you and mamma mention the Penryns of Seabright,’ said Mary, ‘though the place has belonged to the Wallises ever since I can recollect.’

‘Of course; Penryn left the country only two years after I married your mother. He ran quickly through his short time of Seabright.’

‘Was he very improvident or very unfortunate?’ Mary continued to ask, excited to interest in the subject by the hold it appeared to have on her father, who was walking up and down the breakfast-room, or standing and gazing abstractedly out of the window, like a man absorbed in the

conversation, while Mary sat still at the breakfast-table to bear him company.

‘He was both,’ he said shortly, in reply to Mary’s question ; ‘but it is not for us to sit in judgment on him. You will say so when you hear—as there is no reason, beyond an old grudge to speak of the obligation, that you should not hear—what I owed to him in my time. Did your mother ever speak to you of the great risk I once ran of not inheriting this place? I suppose I have cared for it all the more because of what it cost me. It seems I was to pay the forfeit of parting with it, after all.’

‘But not altogether,’ said Mary, eager to contradict her father on this point, and to win him to a more sanguine view of the case ; ‘far from that ; only till you have retrieved your losses.’

‘And when will that be, do you think, child?’ demanded her father impatiently and scornfully ; for he was not a man who could play with facts and indulge in agreeable self-delusions, even to save himself from the sharpest pangs. ‘The place never paid in a business sense. I had not enough ready money for what was required when I entered on the property. Many things were run out under the old *régime*. If I had done what I ought, I should have sold the Warren then, as I had the power to do. But I had been brought up to inherit the estate, such as

it was, and to do nothing else. The life of a country gentleman suited me. I thought I could be of some use here, and I could be happy in my own way. I could make my household expenses few—I trusted to your mother to support me, which she has not failed to do. But it is idle to speak: my calculations have proved erroneous. I have not been a successful farmer of my own land; family expenses on which I did not count have fallen upon me; in short, it has come to this pass—and I have not even the consolation of thinking that no one will be justified in saying “serve him right, for a piece of pride and folly,”’ he finished, with a forced smile.

‘You did your best,’ said Mary in a low tone, as if it were presumption in her to speak at this crisis, and with brimming eyes, as she stooped over the crumbs which she had been collecting for the pigeons.

‘Who shall say,’ objected the Squire, in stern self-accusal—‘who shall say what my best might have been if I had not yielded to selfish impulses, if I had not suffered myself to be blinded by class prepossessions and prejudices, if I had possessed more enterprise? I don’t think I wanted pluck. Well, well—it has ended in your brothers having had to go far enough afield to seek their fortunes, and with even a worse preparation for making their way in the world than I had. But it was not of that we were speaking.’

‘You were enquiring whether mamma had ever told me that you had run some risk of not succeeding to the Warren,’ Mary reminded him quickly. ‘She has often said that you were not a favourite with my grandaunt Sophia, who had the Warren before you.’

‘There was a great deal more in it than that,’ declared Mr. Carteret, stopping in the walk up and down the room, which he had resumed; ‘but your mother never would believe in the danger, or that my aunt was capable of disinheriting me. Your mother was too just a woman herself to compass the probability of such injustice in another. It was the talk of the neighbourhood, nevertheless; and it caused your grandfather—your mother’s father, of course—to be so cool to me—though he was a worthy, unambitious country clergyman, but he was bound to have a care for his daughter’s interest—every time I went near the rectory, that I had half a mind not to wait to stand in a dead woman’s uncertain shoes, but to go abroad. Portugal, then engaged in a civil war, or the backwoods of Canada, were the great resort of the Adullamites in those days. It has come to look a pity that I did not act on my resolution.’

‘But to whom could Aunt Sophia have given the Warren, failing you: she had no other nephews?’ said Mary.

‘No other nephews; and, besides, you are

aware I was the son of a cousin as well as a nephew: your grandmother—my mother—had preserved the name by marrying into a younger branch of the family; but there was no entail, as I said, and the direct lineal descent from father to son had never failed till my grandfather left only three daughters behind him. One died young, the others were my Aunt Sophia and my mother. Though so near akin and left alone together in the world, there was no love lost between them; they had never been on cordial sisterly terms, from causes too remote to penetrate—even if they would repay the discovery—but I believe chiefly because of my Aunt Sophia's tyrannical temper. She had not approved of my mother's marriage, as she never approved of any step which her younger sister took; yet, as she could furnish no good reason for her disapproval, there was a show of friendship between the sisters, and I was brought up and spoiled for any good as the heir, though I was never welcome here.

‘When I left the University after my father's and mother's deaths, matters became a great deal worse. I could not brook my aunt's imperiousness, in which there was no mixture of natural affection. I do not think that I could have brought myself to stoop to coax her—while my father had left me sufficient income for my personal requirements, and I had no debts—even though

I had reckoned that the succession depended on her goodwill. I did not see it in that light. I knew that the place was mine by right, and I could not realise, any more than your mother could, that though my aunt was notoriously indifferent, even averse to me, she could bring herself to die with such an act of gross injustice on her conscience as that of depriving me of all that was left of our common ancestor's property.'

'And if she had been so heartless as well as unjust, to whom could she have left the Warren if not to you?' repeated Mary; 'to her servants or to a public charity?'

'She was not reduced to that,' explained Mr. Carteret; 'although she had no near, hardly any distant kindred, except myself, she had one friend for whom she would have done or ventured anything. She was a strange woman. She could not be reconciled to the sister who had never committed any serious offence against her, and yet she freely forgave the man who had jilted and forsaken her, so far as to centre all the tenderness that was in her on his son, and that was Taff Penryn—this Taff's father. To him she was all that was kind and generous; and as he was a frank, accessible fellow, he was a great deal with her, transacting her business for her, standing in my place, and receiving in return such regard as she had to bestow. I can comprehend now what a close shave it was; how it depended on the

cast of a die whether smothered right or rampant, almost doting, affection should decide who was to have the old Warren.'

'But right won the day,' said Mary, with a gesture of triumph.

'I began to see how little likely it was to win some time before the end,' continued her father, without any echo of her triumph in his gravity. 'I had never cared much for Taff Penryn. Though he had his good qualities, they were not mine, and I drew back from him at last with disgust and indignation. But I could not denounce what I grew to believe were the mercenary designs hidden under his apparent good nature, neither could I bring myself to make any fresh overtures to my aunt, which I told myself would be useless. At last the end came suddenly; my aunt was found dead in her chair—dying alone, as for the most part she had lived. I was sent for and put in charge, though I doubted more and more whether I had come into my inheritance. Taff Penryn arrived, and offered to help me, but I rejected his offer with outward stiffness and secret rage, and he went away shrugging his broad shoulders. I could not prevent his being at the funeral, and I did not desire that he should not be present at the reading of the will, which was to decide matters between us. I should not have thought of disputing it; there were not so many disputed wills

a quarter of a century ago; and there was no doubt that my Aunt Sophia was in her right mind, the frame of mind which had not varied throughout her life.

‘However, there was no occasion for me to dispute the will, which left the estate and house, and all that it contained, to me, her nephew, John Carteret, without a single good wish or friendly expression of any kind, and bequeathed the little sum of ready money which she had possessed—for neither was she a rich woman—as an inadequate token of her entire respect and warm affection for her dear friend and friend’s son, Alfred Penryn.’

‘That was as it should be,’ said Mary with quick approval.

‘Taff Penryn came up with the others, and congratulated me in the easiest fashion possible. I was taken aback, and in a tumult of relief and exultation, and of some self-reproach. But the next time we were alone together I made a bungling attempt to express in the only indirect way that I could express it—I felt bound to attempt it somehow—my sense that I had done him a wrong. He took me up at once, and spoke out without affront, in the light, jaunty, half-blustering tone that he used about everything—something about my seeing to the end of a millstone at last, and of his being compelled to humour the old woman to prevent her doing an injury to herself as well as to others. She might have fallen into more

unsafe hands. There was his brother Henry. Miss Carteret, in her friendship for the whole batch of them, had been good even to him; and—well, there was no occasion for his washing his dirty linen in public—but poor Hal might have been tempted by dire necessity to seize anybody else's bone that was thrown to him.

‘Certainly, I knew that Henry Penryn was a needy, unscrupulous scamp; but that was the manner in which his not much better off brother spoke of his own part in having put from him the estate which was laid at his feet.’

‘He could do nothing else,’ said Mary with the haughty integrity and unhesitating decision of youth; ‘it would have been absolutely base in him to take from Aunt Sophia’s weak partiality what was yours by every title of law and justice.’

‘Softly, Mary,’ her father corrected her; ‘by no means every title. The estate was truly and lawfully, by English law, my Aunt Sophia’s, to sell or dispose of by will as she chose. The person dearest to her on earth, and who had returned her affection from boyhood by what I can conceive now was honest liking, and latterly by acts which might have been a son’s, was Taff Penryn. Nine men out of ten in his position, and without even the excuse of knowing, as he did, that the succession to a place which he could have sold next day for forty thousand pounds might serve to

preserve Seabright—the last remnant of which was just slipping through his loosely grasping fingers—would have considered these reasons ample warrant for allowing himself to be named the heir to the Warren. So far from that, I believe he tried to apologise to me for coming in for the little sum of ready money—something about my wanting it myself—though not so badly, to be sure, as he did; only it would have been all mine had I been on the square with my aunt; but the question was not which of us wanted it most, but whether she was to be let please herself by giving this bequest to him, in order to keep her from alienating the whole property from her family.’

‘He exonerated himself,’ adjudged Mary, in her lofty style of judgment; ‘but as to taking credit for doing what no honourable man could help doing, when the moral right was plain ——’

‘You don’t understand,’ her father interrupted her, driven to the verge of anger by her want of comprehension; ‘you have some sense for a girl, but you are a girl still. An embarrassed man with an estate of his own not more than half the size of the Warren, and you give no credit—which, mind you, he did not take—for resisting so great a temptation! What are you thinking of? Even your mother allowed him merit, and was grateful at the time for his magnanimity. At least you would have expected,’ went on Mr. Carteret, ‘that he and I would have been sworn friends for the rest

of our lives ; but we never saw much of each other. Heaven help me ! I trust that the burden of a benefit conferred did not tempt me to recoil from an uncongenial benefactor. But I have already said that I tried the best I could manage to help him in the straits which soon overtook him. I will add, in my own defence, that Taff Penryn was not such a consistent hero as romance would have made him. He had been capable, in his reckless good nature, of doing one fine thing ; but the further development of his character was not satisfactory. He was light of head as well as light of heart to the last. He went on in pleasant unprofitableness, making the day and the way alike, taking and giving with hearty goodwill any gratification of sport or company that came across him ; not attempting any serious, resolute stand against his difficulties or search for an escape from them, till, what I am afraid I must call his really selfish shortsightedness, came to its natural conclusion. Hard to conceive, is it not, in spite of our knowledge of the mingled web and woof of humanity, that the same man could be at once so unselfish and so selfish ? He was forced to part with the last reversion of Seabright,' pursued Mr. Carteret, before Mary could speak. 'And then he went abroad a great deal more reduced than I am at the present moment, but not so penniless or helpless as to prevent his marrying some girl without money or influence—a German professor's

daughter. I heard of his death not long afterwards, and I believe the widow's relations brought up the only child. His German mother and grandfather both died within the last few years. I have had some correspondence with him,' added Mr. Carteret with sudden reserve, which Mary construed into her father's having sought actively to befriend the young man; 'he has shown ability and independence; his remote frugal German University life has been in his favour; but I have never met him. I can only hope for his own sake that he is not very like his father—the man to whom I owe the Warren,' ended Mr. Carteret, beginning to gather up his letters.

'Although I cannot to this moment acknowledge what you consider the amount of the obligation,' said Mary, 'I am sure we'll do our best to make his stay at the Warren agreeable to Mr. Taff Penryn; and we'll freely forgive him for robbing us of the melancholy peace of our last private regrets. I dare say he will repay us by giving us a great deal of invaluable information about Germany, and by his consenting to our airing—if we have the face to do it—our atrocious schoolroom German. How his well-trained ears must be shocked! For my part I shall be prepared for his wearing spectacles and smoking in his own room; but, as he is only half a German, we may reasonably hope he will not vex mamma's soul by trying to swallow his knife, or dangerously fasci-

nate Fra and Lyd by the size of the ring on his forefinger, according to the style of the Germans we saw on our solitary sail down the Rhine. Our insular sensibilities and sense of the ridiculous will receive a gradual education, which will be best for all parties.' Mary spoke half-seriously and more than half-jestingly, half in pride, half in secret concern for her father, to whom she was conscious the conversation was painful, though he had brought it on himself, and had said there was no reason why she should not be acquainted with the peculiar relations which made the hospitable reception of the stranger a debt of honour. But her deliberate intention was, 'I will be as good as I can to this poor stray fellow, whose father was good to mine, though I cannot consent to grant that there was anything so very remarkable in one man letting another have his due. Human nature would be still meaner than cynics pretend it is, if that were true.'

CHAPTER IV.

CHATTER OVER FRIZETTES AND HAIRPINS.

‘WONDERS will never cease, Lyd,’ said Fra Carteret to her younger sister and satellite. ‘There is a whole live young man whose advent has been announced in our absence, and who is coming to dine and stay here and remain a day at his pleasure. We are coming out. We need not go abroad for adventures. These dear old souls, papa and mamma, are at last awakening to a sense of their duty, and are proposing—too late of course—to do something for their daughters’ advantage.’

‘Fra, don’t be so abominably smart and pert,’ said Mary, who was standing ready for dinner, for which her sisters were dressing, and in order to receive their account of their visit, and to prevent their being too late; ‘don’t talk like a fast girl out of a book.’

‘And don’t talk like a grandmother, Polly,’ threw back Fra, as she sat in her white dressing-gown, unrolling her coils of dark hair—the very shade of her mother’s.

‘I am not surprised that my conversation

should take a venerable colour,' said Mary with a twinkle in her eyes; 'for there is nothing that I hear so much of as these five years in which I am your senior, and by which I am entitled to your deference.'

'Deference, indeed!' protested Fra, 'when you had all the good things before papa's affairs went to the dogs. You need not look indignant; if they are not at the dogs, what is all this row about? and why are Lyd and I deprived of our natural privileges? You know that you did come out, Mary; you were presented to the Queen; you spent half a season in town——'

'So I did; and as mamma and papa were presented before me, we are supposed to have the entrée to all the foreign courts which we are to visit on our travels; and if you are very good children, we shall take you under our wing sometimes within the charmed circles.'

'We'll not have to be obliged to you,' retorted Fra, fastening what hairdressers call a 'strand' of hair, not her own, in her tresses, and proceeding to plait the whole together deftly into an extra loop to hang gracefully down her back. 'I have often heard Miss Bradshaw say that there is not the least difficulty now in people who are in a respectable position getting an introduction to a foreign court.'

'There, now,' said Mary, 'you see the advantage you have over me, in spite of my years; I

should never have known that without being told, and I have had no Miss Bradshaw to tell me.'

'It has been a great loss, but we could not help it,' apologised Lyd, simply, as she strove to make a loop of her fairer hair, nearer Mary's in tint, in exact copy of her sister's. 'But I daresay you are only saying that in banter,' a light beginning to dawn upon Lyd's somewhat obtuse mind. 'I wish you would say what you mean, Mary, and not take to bantering, like papa.'

'It is my advanced age that makes me prone to sarcasm,' said Mary.

'If you continue to harp upon your age, Polly, I shall think that you are really ashamed of it, and it would be rather too early to give way to such mortification; four-and-twenty is not so very old,' said Fra, condescendingly.

'Am I only four-and-twenty?' asked Mary incredulously; 'surely four-and-forty at the lowest computation. I feel so elderly with two such youthful sisters.'

'Everybody knows,' said Fra with slow solemnity, 'that every girl who has any respect for herself, or who is worth her salt, has a young man at least, if she has not got an establishment of her own, before she is four-and-twenty; and then there is no question about her feeling elderly, since she does not stand in her neighbour's way.'

'When do you mean to get settled in life, Fra, and to leave a free field to Lyd?'

‘Before I am four-and-twenty, or I shall know that I have lost half my charm. I am obliged to look out for myself, since mamma and papa, though they are excellent people in their own way, have no notion of marrying their daughters. I should not have expected anything from papa, who is a superior sort of man, and of course behind the rest of the world in ordinary affairs; but really I think more might have been looked for from mamma, else I don’t know what she is good for.’

‘For anticipating every want and wish of her household, including the children of the family,’ said Mary, reproachfully.

‘I should say that our first want—seeing that papa has never been able to make the Warren pay, and that Regy and Tom have carried off any portions worthy of the name we girls might have had—is well-to-do husbands. People used to keep what they regarded a decent silence on such wants, but men and women are more sincere and less hypocritical now; and it is never too late to mend. Here is a marriageable man found and brought within the sphere of our fascinations just when we are going. It can be but a hasty flank movement, with our trunks packed, nothing to wear, and the nakedness of the land only too plainly exposed; but I say we ought to encourage the dear old blunderers.’

‘You are incorrigible, Fra.’

Not many days before Mr. Carteret had remarked to Mary, ‘It strikes me, Mary, that in spite of the trouble which your mother took to find a fit school for your sisters, it has not turned them out well-bred girls.’

And Mary, standing up for her sisters as well as she could, had said, ‘It is the age which is not well bred ; a hurrying, pushing age, which has a weakness for show and assumption of every kind, cannot be a well-bred age.’

In Mrs. Carteret’s uneasy dissatisfaction with Mary’s inclination to independence, her propensity to adopt her father’s opinions and pursuits rather than her mother’s, and her disposition to grapple for herself with some of the social problems of the day, the elder lady had decided that the governess for the time—either too starched or too pliant as she was apt to be—should be dispensed with, and that the two younger girls should go to school for several years. And to school Fra and Lyd had gone, when their mother, after the most careful and untiring inquiries, had fixed on an unexceptionable school for the girls. And from school the two had returned with a wonderful, though somewhat superficial amount of general information, glib schoolgirl linguists—which means they had not only read Racine, Tasso, and Schiller, but had scratched the surface of Molière, Ariosto, and Goethe—in Fra’s case a brilliant musician, in

Lyd's a respectable amateur artist ; and under all this sedulous outward cultivation perhaps with no worse principles and tastes, on the whole, than one might have reasonably expected.

What could the heart of woman or mother desire more? Mrs. Carteret was not discontented ; she had the same indulgence for her younger daughters that she had for her sons ; she understood and made allowance for their foibles. They had no aspirations—in seeking to realise which they failed to fall back on her for sympathy and support. She could see dimly that there was something precocious in modern girls, as a rule, and that while all schoolgirl frivolity, flippancy, and volatility remained in full force, there was something outside of it which could only be stigmatised as hard and a little coarse. Why, the girls were more worldly than their mothers, and more bent on their comforts being attended to than their fathers. If any bashfulness lingered about them it was quickly replaced by boldness ; and as for sentiment, they laughed it out of conversation like the oldest man about town and frequenter of the clubs. But Mrs. Carteret was also quick enough to discriminate that this premature sharpness, self-indulgence, and mercenariness were the results of a bad standard, that they were childish smartness and greed, and that they were for the most part superficial, like all else about the girls.

Strange to say, Mrs. Carteret did not put

much weight on the absence of reverence so conspicuous in Fra, and which was her fatal defect. But when one comes to think of it, Mrs. Carteret, righteous woman as she was, was herself deficient in reverence, even as she was destitute of imagination. She laughed a little aside at one of the peculiarities of the girls—their triumphant appreciation of their own youth, and the wellnigh laughable iteration with which they kept insisting on proclaiming, to interested and uninterested listeners, the years which divided them, even from Mary and her contemporaries, who would next year be half-way between twenty and thirty. It was not what would have been considered well bred in Mrs. Carteret's youth; self-control and subjection were then prominent attributes in a woman's good education. A little modesty and humility were more in practice in those days. Youth had not risen to such a height of privilege as to render its brief possession, even in a sentimental sense, the one crown—fast fleeting—of life itself. Something had been said, which was not wholly forgotten twenty years ago, of a hoary head—instead of a brown or black or even a tawny or golden head—when it was found in the paths of righteousness, being a crown of glory to its possessor.

Mrs. Carteret admitted a good deal of such reasoning quite sincerely, but she said to herself that manners change. Much of the formality of

former generations is laid aside in this ; people pretend to-day to be worse instead of better than they are. Fra and Lyd were girllike—that is, like many modern girls—in their faults. Certainly Mrs. Carteret did not altogether apprehend that Fra and Lyd's arrogant, slightly boisterous youthfulness was allied to an established and growing incapacity for appreciating all that years are worth.

Fra was like her mother in face, a clear coloured, small featured brunette, while she was tall and slender in figure. With her bright richness of colour and grace of outline, her high spirits, her sparkling intelligence—albeit there was a manifest shallowness in the sparkle—her audacious yet half-unconscious airs and assumptions, Fra Carteret was a very pretty, even a striking-looking, girl.

Lyd was not like Fra in face and figure. She bore a faint resemblance to Mary in her brown hair and fair fresh colour and rounded, not ill-grown, slimness. But Lyd had not Mary's nose or brow or mouth. Lyd had a low Greek brow, which had more to do with beauty than intellect ; not that Lyd was so near beauty as either of her sisters. Her nose was an innocent, enquiring, rather round, considerably tip-tilted nose ; her mouth was undecided, both æsthetically and morally. Sometimes, when Lyd was pleased and pleasing, it was a sweet mouth ; in other aspects,

the lips either hung apart indolently, or pursed themselves up consequentially.

The time had been when Lyd was—at a distance intellectually—a small shadow of Mary in more than in person; and when the youngest sister had been as fond of following and copying the eldest as Lyd was now a slavish echo of Fra. But the severance of the younger girls for months at a time from the rest of the family, the throwing them upon each other's resources when they began life in the strange world of a school, with Fra by many degrees the stronger spirit, and Lyd prone to dependence, had combined to transfer Lyd's allegiance entirely. Now, Mary approached as little to Lyd's standard as she did to Fra's; and Lyd, in the wake of Fra, was even disposed to look down a little on Mary, and pity her as beginning to be faded and *passée*—though she bore her four-and-twenty years lightly and looked fresh and blooming in the face, while in fact she was partly superannuated on account of those five or six summers without any fruits. This barren period, in the estimation of judgeslike Fra and Lyd, constituted a portion of precious time, the absence of which in their own case was, like the bliss of ignorance, a source of open congratulation to the girls. It was as if Mary had been so far weighed in the balance and found wanting. It formed an ominous indication of her ultimate failure in life—a failure in securing an independent existence and influence—which at

this epoch Fra and Lyd alike viewed as far more disastrous to a woman than it could be for a man not to succeed in his profession, to make a great crash in some department of politics or business, or to retire worsted from all.

‘I must tell you,’ said Mary, seeking always to hurry the girls, since both their father and mother loved punctuality, ‘that this last guest is nothing more than the son of an old neighbour of papa’s, who was forced to sell Seabright and settle abroad. His successor is landless and I suspect penniless, only a poor, possibly an awkward, German student, with a taste for science and a hankering after the chemical works at Sandford, which brings him here. According to your own declared estimate of “honest poverty,” which is the reverse of that of the poet, I hardly think that he will be worthy of your notice.’

‘I had no great expectations to be disappointed,’ said Fra, with a resigned air. ‘I knew better than that would have come to ; such a fluke was very much what I anticipated from the character of daddy ; but a young man of any description is not to be set at nought in a dead-alive place like this, where boys in jackets or antediluvian widowers are the sole specimens of disengaged humanity. Come, Lyd, this *bursch* will serve as an era in our lives in anticipation of something better, if he can do no more. I must have my black lace, and you had better take out

your blue silk gown, though nurse will be grumpy about repacking them ; but white muslins are such namby-pamby, bread-and-butter, good missish raiment, and we are so sick of them. I beg your pardon, Mary ; I did not observe that you wore yours. I believe that it is what you wore yesterday, and last month, and last year. Child, have you forsworn change ? or are you clinging to the insipid signs of maidenliness ?' It was one of Fra's affectations to speak to Mary as a child, notwithstanding the younger sister's loud reckoning of the elder's seniority. For that matter Fra sometimes addressed her mother in the same terms, and Mrs. Carteret reproved her daughter's licence briskly, and smiled at the skit in her heart.

'Neither the one nor the other,' said Mary, 'and certainly I did not wear this gown last month, when we had the raw east wind ; I had too much respect for my coming rheumatism. But I don't believe Mr. Taff Penryn will ever cast a glance at anything so trifling as girls' dress ; it is more likely that he will engage papa in Shakespearian criticism, or, if he has a thought or a look beyond it, it will be to ascertain whether a British landowner has sufficient sense of comfort to have his dinner table supplied with sour kraut.'

'I should not wonder if you have been enquiring into cook's ability in that respect,' suggested Fra, with a happy guess.

'Well, I did ask her whether she had any red

cabbage left,' confessed Mary; 'but she admits no interference except mamma's in her dominion, and is more stringent in her rules since the hours of her reign here are numbered. She has never forgiven me for wishing her to take pupils, or allowing me to have them, in the line of Cottage Cookery. I am afraid she thought my present enquiry a piece of unprovoked impertinence, so she answered, "I should think, miss, I should know when red cabbage is in season, which is my business; and which is not when sparrow grass and rhubarb is plentiful." I have not even dared to hint at strong coffee.'

'You did not deserve to succeed in trespassing on your inferior's preserves,' said Fra, in indolent supercilious censure; 'and do you know you are really too young yet for setting up a rivalry in base appeals to the lower animal? Ah! that's papa's voice outside, and there is another man speaking. He is come—the conquering hero—the captive slave to be. Do let us have a peep at him.' And Fra slipped nimbly from the chair on which she was seated, in the act of looping up her lace skirt with an impromptu garland of Mary's beloved laburnum, and crouched down on the floor behind the window-blind of the open window, with only her chin above the sill. Lyd, as a matter of course, followed her example, but a little less agilely, so that a brush was knocked down with a clatter which was heard without,

and caused not merely her father but the stranger to look up.

The catastrophe simply afforded Fra gratification, as she ducked lower, pulling Lyd down with her, to the accompaniment of smothered laughter ; while the only figure visible from the lawn was Mary, in her white dress, standing immovable, with heightened colour, in the breach.

‘ For shame, Fra and Lyd, you are no longer schoolgirls, even if such romping were admissible in well-tutored schoolgirls,’ Mary protested, without the least expectation that her protest would be of any avail.

Fra, with all her pretensions and accomplishments, not only condescended to slightly refined bouncing and giggling, carrying Lyd with her—the girls went the length of glorying in their escapades, as at once the evidence and the privilege of this youth on which they set such store. They showed none of the budding graces of that womanliness for which they had no desire. Reserve, dignity, even decorum, were words which had no special womanly signification to Fra, and, by her want of comprehension, they failed also to reach Lyd. Fra desired to be original, brilliant, to have ‘ go ’ in her, to inspire envy, and, if possible, fear, in other women ; all this coexisted with a great amount of childish levity and wild giddy animal spirits. But as to anything so slow, stupid, and goody-goody as to

be filled with a growing sense of responsibility and fitness, with a strenuous obligation to put—not childlike, but childish things behind her, conscious that even this world had such depth and richness as would amply repay her for what she relinquished—that there were higher and purer joys in duty, work, and self-devotion than in boisterous merriment or selfish ambition—all this was what Fra had never dreamed of in her shallow philosophy. This peeping out of the window, and sniggling over it, was bad enough ; but Mary had known Fra capable of peeping out of the door too, and that by no more legitimate a process than stretching her slight figure prone on the ground and protruding her fine nose just beyond the threshold, where she would make her investigation to a low accompaniment of tittering altogether undiscoverable and inexplicable to the object tittered at.

Fra was utterly indifferent to Mary's remonstrances, and fully successful in stifling in Lyd any lingering sense of affront at her position, or of self-reproach at behaving in a manner which papa, who did not take much notice of girls, might easily overlook, but which mamma would decidedly condemn, however swiftly an amnesty would follow on the condemnation.

Fra proceeded in her gracelessness to supply Mary unmasked with her unbiassed opinion of Mr. Penryn's outward man, and to add a running commentary on his gait and movements as he

walked up and down, so far as the cumbered lawn would permit, with Mr. Carteret. ‘An insignificant fellow, not an inch taller than papa is, Polly. I like a six-foot-two man. I know he runs the risk of being mistaken for a guardsman or a footman, and that he is often deplorably lanky when he is not a monster of flesh and blood; still I am inclined to ask quantity in a man and quality in a woman. Fair hair without fail, but face not tallow-coloured or pasty in substance, or like that of a brick pre-Adamite man—not even of a Bath-brick man—with a very respectable brown tan, considering the shade of his hair and moustache. Quite a fierce moustache; that is the second point in his favour. But he has not, as far as I can discern, a single scar of a sword-cut on cheek or chin, caught in encounters with hosts of rivals as he serenaded his whey-faced, whey-haired Gretchen. I should not wonder if he were to turn out a humbug. And, oh! dear, he has such high shoulders and such a pigeon breast, or else it is the way in which his coat is made and buttoned. His trousers are absurdly tight at the ankles—a burlesque on the fashion; and then the manner his hat is worn on the back of his head! After all, I fancy he is not very eligible even *pour passer le temps* and to bring us into flirting practice. I don’t suppose he is worth our lugging out our second best bravery for, Lyd, unless it be to teach us how to make war, my duck; even a

barbarian of a beggarly fantastic German student may serve as a target for our aim.'

'And what if the beggarly fantastic German student be hit,' said Mary, thinking the catastrophe not unlikely or unnatural as she looked at Fra, rising bright, beaming, and wholly dauntless from her ambush.

'Oh, that would only be the fortune of war,' answered Fra, carelessly.

CHAPTER V.

A MAN WHO DESPISED TO BE ENTERTAINED.

MARY found herself—rather to her surprise, for she had seen girls far inferior to Fra in her kind of attractiveness prove irresistibly charming, not merely to empty foolish young men, sceptical of all save their own merits, but even to older, more serious, and, one would have thought, wiser individuals—a true prophet in her hasty random prediction that Mr. Taff Penryn would not condescend to anything so trifling as to girls' dress, not to say girls themselves.

The stranger was, on the first legitimate observation, a middle-sized fair-haired young man of Mary's own age. He showed the Saxon side of his descent by the flaxen in his hair and the blue in his eyes. But he also showed the English and the Cornish-English—for the Penryns had come originally from Cornwall—in the comparatively small well-knit bones, the browner tinge of the skin—which, in company with the fair hair, gave the effect of a child that retains its bleached lint-white mop while it is tanned to the

last extremity of tan under the light thatch—and a nervous energy occasionally leaping out in tone and gesture, balancing phlegm and dreaminess.

In spite of Fra's tirade on the defects of his figure and costume, Taff Penryn was free from slouching awkwardness or slovenly rusticity,—for this reason that, being a naturalised German, he had served his turn as a soldier and seen a little of war. He might have been but a homely working soldier contrasted with the smart dandy soldiers of England, but martial service had at least developed in him—what might otherwise have been lacking—a man's muscles, a man's carriage and activity, in addition to a close-cropped head and regulation moustache. Best of all, it had brought the out-of-the-world, absorbed student into closer contact with the realities of life, and taught him to have a proper value for them.

Taff Penryn might be an enthusiast yet—no regimen could cure him of that disease; but he was an enthusiast of harder, sterner, infinitely more practicable stuff than he would have been had he never marched for long drudging days, encamped for short troubled nights, gone without food or drink for three times the canonical hours, shared his provisions with those worse off than himself, been moved to discern and care actively for his own wants and those of his neighbours, stood sternly under fire, and looked down ruefully on dead men's faces. He had not been a mere

ductile machine in skilful hands—in no circumstances could he have been so, but he had possessed the patience and the thoughtfulness that had done more than reconcile him to discipline purely irksome in itself, they had enabled him to learn all the good lessons which discipline can teach.

There was also a great, manly, frank simplicity about the young fellow which blended happily with his constitutional reserve, and which possibly tended to those occasional spurts of eagerness, even fieriness, that contrasted so oddly with the general calmness of his manner.

It was not on Shakespearian any more than on Biblical criticism that young Penryn betrayed the hot determination as well as the dogged earnestness which lurked under his habitual coolness and acquired self-control; though it was on subjects that appeared to Fra—always rash and daring in her conclusions—even drier and dustier: on political and social economy, on international rights, on the protection and support afforded to inventors, on inventions themselves, especially on chemistry and mechanics. He had some dogmas of his own on an affinity and union not yet sufficiently recognised between mechanical power and chemical force, and on splendid possibilities—not unguessed in any age, but for the most part derided and scouted in this—which they presented for the future. He did not hesitate to say of this law, argument or documentary clause, or of

that combination, 'it has been the work of short-sighted selfishness overreaching itself in the end ;' 'it is barefaced injustice and fraudulent misappropriation, which, when the world is older and wiser it will not submit to.' 'I know that there are such effects, I have tried them for myself, and I pledge myself for results, glorious in time.'

Notwithstanding this quiet audacity and persistent self-confidence, his tone to Mr. Carteret was perfectly respectful. Mary even fancied she also detected in it a ring of gratitude, not the less sincere that it was, in order to meet the wishes of the person most concerned, kept in the background. But there was not a semblance of subjection ; there was very little deference beyond what any fairly courteous young man would show to a senior. It was clear that this Taff Penryn had kept himself untrammelled in mind and opinion, even as his father had been free from any opinions, good or bad, and had only followed where inclination led him.

The young man spoke English well, with only a little overelaborate precision and the shade of a foreign accent, which was not without its pathos in a man revisiting the country in which his forefathers had held a considerable stake, nay, in a man sitting as a strange guest at a table where, if his father had chosen, the son might have sat as host.

Mr. Carteret listened to the lad's talk which the senior drew forth, with a somewhat languid

but genuine interest, in which, good man though he was, some bitter covetousness mingled. ‘Why should my lads have been what they are, when Taff Penryn, who I could swear never did anything in particular for his son, save bring him into the world, in which he left him scantily provided for, leaves an heir to his general insolvency such as this young fellow? If I had known that German simplicity and frugality had this end, I might have expatriated myself to some purpose twenty years sooner.’

Mrs. Carteret only roused herself to ascertain that this second Taff Penryn bore little resemblance to the first, and that he was not laying himself out to please the girls—indeed, he appeared to her a stiff, pedantic, indifferent young man; then she forgot all about him in the multiplicity of her concerns. She had never been able to own that obligation to the father which, once owned, would have disposed her to take the son to her heart. She was a woman in whom, though intrinsically true, the faculty of blinding herself to the truth existed to a large extent. In this respect she was the reverse of her husband, and even of Mary, who had by nature troublesomely, even depressingly wide open mental eyes, that took in both sides of a question, and which no partiality, any more than any hypocrisy, could seal fast.

Mary liked to listen to those never exhausted questions of large, if not of primary, import on

which her father and the Anglo-German launched forth. The sound of them seemed to extend her own horizon and stirred her with a refreshing and bracing effect, though she was as ignorant as a baby, she was ready to confess with quick self-reproach, of either chemistry or mechanics.

As for Fra, she was sure it was foreign bosh. She had seen ever so many chemical experiments performed by Miss Bradshaw's own private professor at her school. She had looked at, listened to, and stood them with credit as became one of the foremost girls in the school examination. She had been instructed in enough of the laws of mechanics to enable her to take the prize in natural philosophy. But she had never observed for herself, or heard from others, instances of dawning marvels such as these hinted at. Many of these Germans were either dupes or impostors. There was her music master, who, though he played and sang divinely, believed in the world's going back to primitive conditions, in every man, woman, and child working with their hands, eating when they were hungry, and drinking when they were thirsty, and in language itself and musical laws being reduced to first principles and practices, so that he should have to call a sheep or *schaf* a baa-baa, and to sigh into a reed in order to produce harmony. And there was her German master, who tried all sorts of tricks on his dog to see if it could be brought to think, and on his child to see if it could be induced to bark

instead of to howl, as a natural utterance of its feelings.

But Fra was not impartial; she was the essence of coquetry and love of power. Notwithstanding her slender estimation of Taff Penryn at the first peep, and her cool conviction that no man in his circumstances was worth a sensible girl's serious thought, she desired to attract him to her, were it only for the evening. She wished to show her girlish supremacy, though the spectators were limited to her father and mother, Mary, Lyd, and Mrs. Penfeather, who counted as nobody with Fra. She longed for the satisfaction of at once conquering this stray antagonist, as an earnest of a host of others, immensely superior in person, manners, and estate—for heart and mind, undoubtedly clever as Fra was, went very little way in her criticism. She was farther impelled to cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Penryn by learning that he had been a soldier in the late Franco-German war. She had not thought of the probability of this finish to his education; but, in spite of the omission, she had an entirely girlish and extravagant conception of the gain it was for a man to be a soldier. The hollow show and sound of the profession, with what it has of vulgar sensationalism, had a strong hold on her imagination, a hold which her cleverness and practicality could not entirely shake off. It was not that she prized a brave man the more for his tried bravery; but that red coats, helmets, and feathers

flashed and floated agreeably before her mind's eye. They were to her synonymous with a position equal in state, though not in substance, to that of a squire at least. As to the other side of a soldier's life, according to the manner in which Fra wildly and ignorantly pictured it—the licence, the excitement, the dash and crash and climax of horror, that had a charm also for what was coarse-grained in the girl. She had been too carefully nurtured to have read largely one class of novels cropping up more or less in this and in every generation; but without having had their heroes depicted to her in glowing and violent colours, she had an instinctive preference for these heroes' attributes.

Fra was intensely piqued to find Mary's cold-blooded prognostication prove substantially correct.

Taff Penryn hardly looked at Fra any more than at Mary or Lyd. He was not to be smitten by the first dazzling sparkle of her presence; he was not to be disturbed by her ill-mannered whispering and grimacing to Lyd. He looked up, glancing across the table at her from under his not too flaxen eyebrows and eyelashes, when she made some of her contradictory and unique observations. For Fra was the soul of contradictoriness, and if she was not unique she was nothing. Thus she maintained that she enjoyed and throve on a draught of air, or that green was a colour which always tried and distressed her eyes—and then she followed up a little warm praise of Mary's, given to a

point in the neighbouring scenery on which the conversation had turned, by a plaintive entreaty, 'Don't gush, Mary dear, nobody does so now-a-days, therefore it is a great deal of trouble wasted.'

But Fra herself had the shrewdness to distinguish that the looks which she had drawn from Taff Penryn were entirely those of mystification, and not to be followed by looks of admiration, growing with the magical rapidity of Jack of the Bean Stalk's vegetable in the night. Taff Penryn was clearly saying to himself, wherein was his English deficient that he could not make out this girl's talk? That was all.

Fra called in the aid of her music, one of her grand arms of assault as well as *pièces de resistance*, to be plied on this sluggish German the moment she had retired to the drawing-room. Considering his antecedents and national predilections, she ought to have been successful there.

But either Taff Penryn had been accustomed to hear music which went to his heart, while this bravura execution only tinkled in his ears, or his English side had prevailed over his German half and his German rearing, and he was, for a wonder, not musical. Any way he was in no haste to leave the dining-room, though he would not taste Mr. Carteret's port, and had preferred his host's claret to his sherry. When he did make his entrance, he did not approach the piano with its marshalled tempest of sound, but sat down by

Mrs. Penfeather, for whom he had shown the only gallant preference that he was brought to testify. That, as anybody could guess, was not because of a timid or blasé leaning to a mature matron and widow who was beyond the thought of second wifehood. It was because she had happened to say something, in the course of conversation at dinner, of ancient Indian looms and Indian dyes.

‘Lyd, come and play a duet with me and deafen that short-sighted bear,’ Fra invited her younger sister in a whisper of wrathful disdain. Lyd was not slow to obey the invitation, while she provoked Fra by her alarmed speculations, whether all young German men would be as dull and priggish as this example, and got scolded at the same time for her halting bass.

In the meanwhile, the woman entirely at leisure in the company, Mrs. Penfeather, had taken in the scene, the relations of the parties, and the byplay with much interest and amusement, which were not lessened by the fact that she had a dim idea, from what she recollected of ancient gossip and from her own observation, of the species of obligation, half-painful, which bound Mr. Carteret to Taff Penryn.

She understood, from her power of sympathy quite as much as from her knowledge of German life and character, better than anyone else present—not excepting Mr. Carteret—the kind of young man Penryn was, and his position with regard

to the other persons present. ‘He is a student, more of nature than of books. He has not awakened yet, if he ever will awaken, to the place that a woman—one woman—might have in his history. He is as ignorant of women as a baby; and it is that hopeless ignorance of partial familiarity, not the total ignorance which is easily thrilled with the sense of novelty and the first conception of possibilities. Very likely he has had a brother and sister familiarity with dozens of good-humoured, musical, housekeeping daughters of old professors with whom he was a favourite—fellow-professors of the grandfather of whom I heard him speak to Mr. Carteret—and sisters of bosom friends. The familiarity has bred not contempt—he looks too manly and kindly for that—but simply indifferent goodwill. If ever the idea of a woman as a power has crossed his mind, it is of some grandly perfect, beneficent creature like Goethe’s Dorothea—the queenly peasant-woman, who, in her purity and single-heartedness is strong enough, brave enough, and nobly humble enough to help and serve all, great and small; or at least of some figure as stately in her simplicity as Irmgard, the king’s daughter, whom Ingo the Vandal finds among her maidens superintending the last milking, butter-making, and cheese-storing at the summer pasture. What chance has the reality of a modern accomplished girl against the visions of such human divinities?

I can see that my young philosopher is tempted to look with a critical and condemning eye on the luxuries and ceremonious habits of civilised life in a country house in England. He turns back longingly to his carpetless, scantily furnished German rooms, early frugal dinners, and free-and-easy suppers, as more consonant with hard study, high thinking, and the delights of friendly intercourse. Our crowd of comforts and refinements, stifling and imprisoning, have no charms for him; he is at once too hardy and too earnest in his aims. And he laughs at our strictures on foreign rudeness and boorishness. He makes the concession to the drops of English blood in his veins, and his probably unconsciously inherited English traditions, as well as to his freer intercourse with English people, of doing in England as the English do, and of not startling and offending Mrs. Carteret by putting his knife into his mouth or proceeding to light his cigar at table. But he would have his own sturdy and able defence—supposing he were called upon to defend them—of these objectionable practices, if I read aright the proud unblenching gleam of his blue eye. He would tell us that as the circumstance of the German and Vandal foot—with the point turning outwards and the ball of the foot pressing strongly downwards—while the Romans stepped with small foot and short step on the whole sole, like weary people, implied the final supremacy of the Gothic races, so the cool

and safe application of the knife to a convenient use and the frank and fearless indulgence in the precious weed are but so many proofs of the unfailing nature of German intrepidity and skill, and of that rugged truth and dauntless simplicity on which, so far as he derives a share in them from his maternal ancestors, he is inclined to boast. But he is still purblind where girls and women are concerned. He does not even see that there is any difference in this family; he classes Mary and Fra and Lyd all together; he would not know one from another or recognise her at all if he ever saw her again. The Carterets are alike idle fine ladies, and fantastic frivolous girls to him. Oh! my young hero, you are very blind.'

When Taff Penryn found that he could reach Sandford station by train late that night, and that he should have greater advantages in availing himself of the order which Mr. Carteret could procure for him to see the chemical works on his property, if the visitor applied for admission early in the morning, he decided at once on taking leave of his host and hostess.

There was no lure sufficient to cause him to protract his stay, even to the term originally proposed of remaining over the night. Ease, relaxation, and the company of young people like himself—albeit they were girls—had evidently no effect on modifying Taff Penryn's scientific zeal.

Such a preference of serious business to lighter

enjoyment in which the weaker sex count for something is apt to be distasteful to young women, above all when the preference is shown by young men. It put the crown on Taff Penryn's deficiencies and misdeeds in Fra Carteret's eyes.

Notwithstanding, after his departure she was not above betraying her disgust at such utter stolidity by stretching herself on the most comfortable couch, regardless of the irritation which any sign of laziness and self-indulgence in a girl did not fail to produce in her punctilious unresting mother. Fra prepared, in supercilious silence which took no note of Mrs. Penfeather's presence, to console herself by her own thoughts or dreams, in lieu of a sufficiently entertaining book, which did not happen to be within her reach.

Fra's high spirits were fitful in their very height, and were apt to alternate with corresponding depths which certainly were short lived as yet. She neither saw nor owned any obligation to veil or repress her changes of mood, to contribute to family cheerfulness, and to solace parental cares. She was a young girl, and therefore she was an irresponsible being, who was to follow her inclinations, wherever they led. In some respect she was like Mr. Taff Penryn in his pursuit of knowledge.

Lyd was more tractable, but unfortunately her tractability showed itself at present in making a

close copy of Fra's behaviour; so Lyd prepared to fill an easy chair and gape in concert.

'I am afraid a good deal of the spirit of our party has gone with the gentlemen,' said Mrs. Penfeather, with dancing eyes, when Mr. Carteret had left the room to stroll with young Penryn to the station, and the young girls had disposed themselves as has been described. 'It is a pity that we poor women cannot be more independent,' added Mrs. Penfeather, meekly.

'My dear Celia, I am not aware that I am more talkative in the presence of my husband, or of any other man, than in his absence,' Mrs. Carteret defended herself literally and a little indignantly.

'We are only summoning up our spent forces,' protested Mary, merrily. 'Mrs. Penfeather, I am going to engage you, and beat you to boot, in a game of *bélique*.'

'And if you think, Mrs. Penfeather, that I derived any grain of excitement from a mass of German conceit, you are very much mistaken,' said Fra, suddenly starting up from the sofa and from her musings.

'Oh! Mrs. Penfeather,' Lyd chimed in, playing the part of *enfant terrible*, and proceeding to speak out what was in her mind with unvarnished plainness, 'do you think that we are really vexed because Mr. Penryn has hardly looked at or spoken to us? You are quite wrong; I would scorn to care.'

‘And so would I, Lyd,’ granted Mrs. Penfeather. ‘Fanny, I have not got over my old trick of teasing, which would better become your girls. Forgive me for being impertinent and naughty. Won’t you show your magnanimity by playing with Mary and me, you two others?’

‘Oh, pray excuse us,’ said Fra, shrugging her shoulders; ‘Lyd and I played *bézique* till we got sick of it, during our holidays.’

‘Oh, pray excuse us,’ echoed Lyd, with a little hankering glance at the cards.

‘You must understand they exhausted *bézique* when you and I were in our cradles, in spite of their superior juvenility,’ explained Mary. ‘It does not do to be too consistent; or is it because Young England is quite above indoor games? Papa and I are such wasters of our time and our wits, that we sometimes sit down to play whist when we can persuade mamma to join us, for we have not got the length of double dummies. And we often challenge each other to draughts, since we play chess so inequally that it degenerates into a mere lesson from papa to me.’

‘You know that I am exceedingly fond of billiards, Polly,’ said Fra, recovering her airiness.

‘And pray don’t say Young England, Mary,’ objected her mother; ‘it is a man’s phrase, and refers to men. I don’t see what it has to do in a girl’s mouth.’

At that moment Mr. Carteret returned, looking

fagged, even by his short walk, and threw himself with an air of relief into his chair.

Mary looked up, half expecting him to say a word in commendation of their late guest, who had possessed more than one source of interest for her, though he had not repaid her interest in kind. Instead, Mr. Carteret exclaimed, 'I am thankful I have got quit of that fellow; he is an idiot—a lunatic.'

Mary stopped short in dealing the cards in utter amazement, Mrs. Penfeather stared, and Mrs. Carteret cried out, 'Good Heavens, John, was there anything wrong with the young man—why did you let him come here?' And Lyd, who was naturally an arrant coward, gasped instead of gaping, and grew faint, but had still sufficient strength left to look to her prompter for her cue.

'Oh, not so bad as that, papa,' said Fra, with her inveterate contradictoriness; 'he is a dolt, I daresay, with all his show of information—I always distrust sententious people; he is comically disagreeable; but as for being out of any mind he may have——'

'Hold your tongue, Fra,' said Mr. Carteret, moved beyond his usual sufferance, 'you know nothing about it. He actually believes in the possibility of discovering perpetual motion, and means to set himself to the task, in which case he will die a maniac as well as a beggar. When I told him that he might as fitly set out, at this

time of day, in search of Eldorado, or in pursuit of the philosopher's stone, he answered quite mildly—though I suspect he is as hot as he is wrong-headed when he is once fairly roused—that he gave up Eldorado, as the world had been sailed and journeyed over—he was good enough to admit principally by English enterprise—in all directions. But as for the philosopher's stone, we had only to find that gold was not an elementary body, while many of our supposed elements had proved compounds, and there was the old philosopher's feat perfectly possible, though he for one did not care to attain to it. It was only the comparative scarcity of gold and its value as a mode of currency which rendered it worth. Of course I knew that before he was born; but all the same, the lad is stark, staring mad.'

'But, papa,' Mary began to urge, not in the perverse contradiction of Fra, but with a light of wistful speculation in her eyes, 'were not all the destined discoverers of the past looked upon by their contemporaries as madmen?'

However, there was a limit to Mr. Carteret's liberality, and he drew the line considerably on this side of perpetual motion. 'Nonsense, Mary,' he said testily, for he had been taken aback and disturbed by what had occurred; 'wild, vain dreams which no man of sense can cherish, which experience and common sense have always combined to disprove, may well be taken as beyond

proof; our faculties are within bounds here, at least, and even a rational child begins soon—and the sooner the better—to distinguish these bounds. When a man's imagination is not balanced by his reason he is a fool, and on the road to become a madman.'

'Of course this young Penryn must be mad,' said Mrs. Carteret, without a doubt. 'What a blessing that he conducted himself, I must say, like other people during dinner, and that he went away of his own accord, quietly; and what a good thing that he did not come over from Germany years ago—I think you once talked of inviting him, without any great need—and infect the boys with his harebrained notions.'

'No great danger of that,' said Mr. Carteret, shortly, with a revulsion of feeling.

'A dazed, daft German schemer, who will propose to give us wings next,' said Fra, with a light scorn, as if she could accurately measure and assign a place to the species.

But Mary could not so easily give up the romance of the young man, who in this nineteenth century was chivalrously—or was it deliriously?—ready to wear out his life and dash out his brains against the unsolved problem of perpetual motion, and who still had a word to say for the finding of the philosopher's stone. It was not that the putting one's hand upon the last, were the secret imparted to a friend, might compass a deliverance,

clear the lands of the Warren of their debts, and preserve to her father and his family their home and country. Mary really forgot that personal consideration at the moment, in spite of her late longing to transmute living into dead gold. It was the wish to keep her faith in the world's inexhaustible freshness of resource and never-failing kingdoms to conquer. It was her eagerness to convince herself that she had seen in the erect, staid, almost stiff young German—with his brown face and his flaxen hair, his concentration of purpose and his tinge of dogmatism, which might in truth be fanaticism—one of those conquerors of kingdoms, deliverers of captives, leaders and pioneers of whom she had thought so much, but whom, as if they had been so many Greek heroes, she had hardly hoped to see with her own eyes. She had expected, least of all, to have the experience in her own quiet country home, where the quarter sessions, the last run of the hounds, the wheat, the peaches, the cricket and the croquet, the first shot of September, the church rates, the last coming-of-age party, or Sunday school feast, were about the utmost stretch of topics that anybody, except herself and her father, cared to discuss.

‘Mrs. Penfeather,’ said Mary, in a side appeal, ‘do you think that a man must be insane who still tries to remove the hitches that prevent perpetual motion?’

‘I am not prepared to speak to his sanity,’ said Mrs. Penfeather ; ‘ but,’ she added consolingly, ‘I think I have known men who, in trying to seize the moon, have inadvertently, as it were, got a gas-lamp for themselves and their neighbours.’

CHAPTER VI.

MARY AND MRS. PENFEATHER SPY THE LAND AT
SANDFORD.

THERE seemed a fate against the Carterets quitting the Warren at the time appointed, though none knew better or shrunk more than Mr. Carteret from the unmitigated evil of prolonged leave-taking. The head of the house was seized with an inopportune, aggravated fit of gout, on the back of Taff Penryn's passing visit, and on the eve of the Squire of the Warren's making an imperatively necessary closing investigation at Sandford—a separate portion of the considerable extent of land which Mr. Carteret had himself farmed—before he gave over farms and bailiff to the coming tenant who was to be the landlord's successor in the active management of a third of the estate.

On the one hand, it was evident that if Mr. Carteret ventured beyond his lawn against the express orders of his doctor, at the present stage of his illness, it was probable that he would induce a still more severe—nay dangerous attack, which might disable him for many weeks from

prosecuting with his family the journey which had the search for a home as its object.

On the other hand, it was equally plain that if Mr. Carteret deferred taking Kit Must's extraordinary and ravelled accounts off the man's hand, and seeing in a general way that the offices, stock, and crop were in the state that the departing proprietor intended them to be, then Mr. Carteret must also defer his departure, and write and put off the tenant's taking possession.

'If somebody could only go for you, papa,' said Mary persuasively, as she and her mother were talking over the matter one evening with the impatient invalid, in his dressing-room.

'There is nobody,' said Mrs. Carteret; 'I am sure you know that, Mary, since poor Regy and Tom are at the ends of the earth; their services are missed now, though they were not greatly prized when we could command them.'

'Let me go,' said Mary boldly; 'I have been far oftener at Sandford with papa than either Regy or Tom ever was. I know very nearly how everything—fields and animals—should look at this season; I have written down Kit Must's accounts from his hieroglyphics and from his dictation during the autumn when papa's wrist was sprained. You said, papa, that the accounts were fairly written out. You suffered me to add them up also, and you were satisfied with the arithmetic. I am not a bad clerk and accountant for a girl—you have owned that—'

thanks to my having the benefit of the boys' tutor before they went to school, and to my first governess's having had the ambition to share in the work of a preparatory boys' school kept by her brother, a seventh wrangler.'

'Are you out of your mind, Mary?' her mother sought to put her down; 'what sort of bailiff's work can be looked for in a young lady? Why, I have even heard your father hesitate to give a renewal of the leases of farms to farmers' widows, and farmers' daughters, who had been bred to business—country business, from their infancy and heard and seen nothing else all their lives.'

'I don't know that I was right there, as men go,' said the troubled Squire.

'And I am sure,' said Mary, a little passionately and defiantly, for the girl's heart was sore on this very point, 'that if I have no country knowledge, or capacity for working out accounts, I do not know what I am fit for. I am a full-grown woman, and yet, if papa did not keep me, I could not keep myself, far less anybody who depended upon me, in bare bread. I could not teach much, and the governess ranks are so overstocked that I should not have a chance for what little I could teach. I should starve if I sought to maintain myself by embroidery; I have not the faintest symptoms of the genius which might enable me to make the world better and happier while I made myself richer as an artist or an author,

even if the artist and author world, narrow as it is, were not also overpopulous.'

'I do not know what you are talking of,' interposed Mrs. Carteret; 'there is no question of your keeping yourself; what have you to do with working for your bread? are you not a gentlewoman? have you not your father and me?'

'Gentlewomen have had to work for their bread before now, Fanny,' said Mr. Carteret gravely; 'and as for you and me, not only will Mary and the rest fail to have us always to stand between them and hard necessity, it is on the cards that, though we are spared, we may live to prove but an inefficient screen. My affairs are not in a flourishing state—you are all aware of that—and these are not the best of times for landowners. It only remains for the coming tenant who takes off my hands the two best farms which I kept in my own possession to be as unlucky and incapable as I have been, to lose his head and his means, and end by becoming insolvent—there is simply wanting a flood or a fire—are they so unexampled that we should not anticipate them?—and I do not see how we could afford to live together abroad in the quietest way.'

'And I do not see the good of conjuring up additional and extraordinary misfortunes,' insisted Mrs. Carteret; 'but if the worst should come to the worst we could go to Tom and Regy;' her

face softened and even acquired a gleam of gladness at the idea.

Mr. Carteret looked at her silently. Was there any use—would there not be inhumanity—in seeking to shake the mother's incredulity in her sons' incapacity?

‘You are right so far,’ he granted with a sigh; ‘there is no advantage in forestalling disaster. But I should like to say this much in reference to the future, and to the poor old Warren, which is still ours nominally. I hope and trust,’ and here he spoke slowly and emphatically, ‘that the boys will seek to carve out their own fortunes, whatever these may be, in the new countries they have resorted to; that they will be cured of their most mischievous inclination to lean upon another, though that other be a father and the holder of a few acres of land. I have apprised both Regy and Tom that the Warren, which is in my own power as it was in my predecessor's, will become after my death the portion of my widow and my daughters if they survive me and remain unmarried. I may add that I look to you, Mary, whom I have—for my own pleasure at first, I confess—trained to have some intelligent appreciation of country interests, and a fair amount of business habits, to do what you can to manage the place and make it remunerative for the maintenance of your mother and sisters.’

Mary was naturally touched and impressed.

Mrs. Carteret was not so much offended by this flagrant instance of Mr. Carteret's making an eldest son of Mary, as she was scandalised at the infringement of established standards. But even the scandal she felt, was held in check by the solemnity that steals over the audience which is called on to listen to a speaker who, whether in health or in sickness, calmly and confidentially narrates his views and wishes with regard to his family and his estate after he shall be removed from all active intervention in their affairs. She was also smitten with sharp pain, for she loved her husband, though she could not understand him, and he had drifted away from her.

It was not inconsistent with the awe and ache at her heart that Mrs. Carteret should speak with greater asperity than ever as she sought to turn the conversation into lighter channels.

'I hope Mary will vindicate your good opinion,' she said, very much as if her fear exceeded her hope; 'but, for my part, I have little faith in women who outstep their own province. They have quite enough to engage them there, if they discharge their obligations faithfully. As to that first governess of yours, Miss Hurst, Mary, in arranging a number of papers I have just come across some letters of hers to your father. I was amazed and indignant to find that there was incorrect spelling in these letters; believe spelt with the second *e* before the *i*, and coolly—when she had

coolly considered some point—with one *l*; vulgar errors in common spelling in a governess, not a mere nursery governess, but one receiving a liberal salary for occupying a position of trust and responsibility in a gentleman's family! I leave you to draw your own inference whether Miss Hurst would not have been better employed minding her own spelling and writing—she wrote an ugly cramped hand, which any village schoolmistress might easily have surpassed—than in promoting her ridiculous scheme of teaching Latin and mathematics for her brother, the wrangler, who must have had as little sense as his sister had.'

'It was a trick of spelling, a failing which Miss Hurst shared in common with many great men,' asserted Mary. 'She had the making of a great woman in her, if women were allowed to be great, which was the reason why a village schoolmistress could have surpassed her in copperplate writing. I never learnt so much from any other teacher; and she was so tolerant and merry with it all, used to laugh so heartily at my blunders, and was so fond of kittens. And that school of hers and her brother's,' continued Mary, showing a freedom of grammatical construction worthy of Miss Hurst herself, 'has been delightfully successful; why, it is quite famous.'

'I don't give much for such fame,' said Mrs. Carteret. 'I was very glad to get quit of Miss Hurst, who, though she was not vulgar, was essen-

tially unfeminine, and therefore unladylike. Her intentions were not bad, I admit that; and yet I will never cease to regret having subjected you, while still a child spoilt by your father, to so pernicious an influence.'

Mary was tempted to ask whether it was her spelling or her morals which her mother feared had suffered the most from the contamination of Miss Hurst's preceptorship, but she refrained, and her father spoke.

'I really wish I could accept your offer, Mary, or that you could make it good,' he said. 'It will be a serious inconvenience as well as a great annoyance to me if we cannot start by the 20th of this month. I dare say you could take down Kit Must's accounts better than a stranger not accustomed to his ingenious but intricate method, and that you could make an intelligible report of the state of matters so that I might amend anything that was grossly wrong before I resigned my charge.'

'I never heard of a young lady doing such a thing,' complained Mrs. Carteret, more tartly than ever; 'and it is clear that Mary cannot go over and live even two or three days alone with Mrs. Must and her son. There is another of your protégés, Mr. Carteret, who cannot keep an account like anybody else's steward. Am I to understand that, in the style of Miss Hurst, he is above working by the rule of three and employing legible characters.'

‘Rather below it, poor fellow, so far as education goes,’ answered Mr. Carteret; ‘but mother wit is before education, and I have never had reason to regret putting Kit at his post. The new tenant, if he has any nous, will retain Kit’s services. I wish all my other experiments had answered half as well. There has been little sopped hay or shaken grain, and not a case of rinderpest since Kit was my right-hand man.’

Mrs. Carteret was not attending to him; her mind was wandering away to her right-hand woman, if she could be said to admit of such a functionary. ‘At least even you will allow that Mary could not go over and remain by herself at Sandford on this mad errand of taking an account of Kit Must’s stewardship,’ said Mrs. Carteret, meaning to cut the matter short.

‘Could not you go with her?’ suggested Mr. Carteret.

‘And you ill and helpless!’ said his wife, reproachfully, ‘even if there were not the house to close here, the last touches to be put to the packing, and some parting calls which, in spite of all that I have been able to say, have been left to the end. Utterly impossible, John!’ exclaimed his wife, energetically. At the same time she began to experience sundry twinges of alarm. She had been accustomed to defer to Mr. Carteret’s wishes, while he allowed her great independence in her own line, and while she retained her individuality

intact. She knew of old that when he once adopted a purpose it was hard to turn him from it, however preposterous it might appear in her eyes. Even she was reduced to temporise to ensure her own exemption from removal, at the very time she was most required, from her proper sphere and her clamorous duties, by beginning to say, doubtfully, ‘If Mary likes to take upon her so strange a commission, which is far out of a girl’s way, and of which I should think she will make a mess——’

‘I have eyes in my head as well as another, even as well as a man,’ pleaded Mary. ‘In addition to making out Kit Must’s 8’s and 6’s, and being able to follow his system of division, I can see what fences are giving way and what gates are broken, I can tell how the wheat looks in this field or that, and I may give a shrewd guess whether the potatoes are springing, though the crops have ceased to be papa’s. I can count every horse and ox, and the very cocks and hens; what is to hinder me?’ asked Mary, impatiently.

‘It is to relieve your father’s mind, that is the only excuse,’ said Mrs. Carteret. ‘Perhaps Mrs. Penfeather might accompany you; it would be a little change for Celia, and I could depend upon her as upon myself.’

So it was arranged, to the comfort of Mr. Carteret and the content of Mary, who, in addition to the pride of being of use and the joy of serving

her father, wished to see Sandford again, and rather liked the company of Mrs. Penfeather, though, according to an instinct of humanity, she had been slightly set against her at first by her mother's high commendations of Mrs. Penfeather's conduct and manners as a model for all succeeding generations of women. And Mrs. Penfeather was not displeased with the arrangement, though she seriously debated within herself whether she ought not to warn Fanny that she was not the supremely safe person that Fanny took her for. But she dismissed the necessity with the promise to herself that she would take as good—perhaps better—care of Mary as though she, Mrs. Penfeather, had never moved out of her early groove and were all that Fanny's 'fancy painted her.'

Mary and Miss Penfeather arrived, after a few hours' railway journey, at the station nearest Sandford farm. Kit Must was waiting for them and their travelling wraps with the Whitechapel cart, which was the sole equipage kept at Sandford.

Mary thought it was delightfully independent, and that nothing could be more exhilarating than the drive straight through the cornfields by roads which were somewhat too rough for Mrs. Penfeather's nerves and bones, and leading, without let or hindrance, up to the very farmhouse door.

Sandford was a large white farmhouse dropped like a great stone in the middle of the fields. It

afforded a complete contrast to the Warren house in architecture, grounds, and situation. It might have been erected, and probably, though the place was not above thirty years old, some of the rooms had been used for a barn and granary, so spacious were they in their own homely way. It had never been anything better than a farmhouse, though built by a man who was at once proprietor and tenant. The house and land had been sold to Mr. Carteret, when he was still a young squire, and not yet so hampered for money as to escape being bitten by the passion of adding house to house and field to field, so leaving the Warren estate by a thousand acres larger than he had found it.

Sandford was destitute of avenue of any kind, of wood or moor. It stood in a bare though rich corn country, and its founder had done nothing to remove the bareness and supply shade, beyond laying out a large garden given up to fruit and vegetables behind the house, where the superexcellent brick wall met the enclosure of the offices, and by adding a heavy unornamental white stone porch to the front of the house. It seemed as if the owner's invention had failed at this point, or else his funds had been turned in the direction of the handsome offices, which he had taken a professional pride in supplying with every modern convenience for the lightening of labour and the wellbeing of generations of animals. Not a bush had been planted or railing raised; the house in

its front aspect stood bare and staring, confronting the fields, from which it was only separated by the rough road without a boundary, and that led away without an interruption into a fruitful wilderness of more fields.

‘It might be a farmer’s paradise,’ Mary said gaily, and she thought there was something of the farmer in her nature, for she liked to feel herself like a lark in the midst of the corn when she was at Sandford. She did not miss a park or paddock when these undulating green waves of corn swept all around her. She did not miss a garden when she had poppies, oxeyed daisies, corn-cockles, and corn-marigolds quite at hand. Those unapproachable flowers were so very accommodating that, in place of wanting to be cared for, they did their best to come up of their own sweet will, in spite of Kit Must and his harrow, and never failed in luxuriance whatever his malice. Mary maintained above all, there were such fresh free changes of the seasons under one’s very nose at Sandford—from the date when the blue green and grass green, the autumn and spring growths of corn were coming up with the loveliest most tender hairy coat on the rough brown earth, to the season when the corn was growing tall and stately and beginning to shoot into the ear as at present. This was the time when the wild flowers abounded, and the landrail was for ever sounding his rattle, while there were little bright eyes and furry tails of weasels

to be seen at the roots of the hedges, and glossy black moles about the sides of ditches—as there were blackbirds in the walnut tree on the lawn, squirrels on the firs on the moor, and stray hedgehogs to be found of an evening in either of the avenues at the Warren.

Then there came the days when the grassy stalks dried up into straw and bent under a weight of pale or red gold—another gold from that of the poor dropping, perishing laburnum—to be followed by the stage of the maize-tinted stubble, with the wild thyme's and mint's crushed out scent under the sportsman's foot.

Yes, Mary acknowledged the ploughed land must come in its turn; but the gleaming ploughs before the powerful horses and patient ploughmen, with the crowd of magpies and crows descending to pick up their prey from the long straight furrows, formed no unpleasant sight, and winter did not generally pass without supplying at least one white mantle, wide and far spread, spotless and undefiled, till the sun's rays melted it clean away.

Fra might rail against that odious farmhouse to which shooting parties were apt to be sent, and Lyd might complain that its vicinity did not afford a single thatch roof or water-wheel for sketching; even Regy and Tom had blamed it because the offices were too modern and in too good repair to furnish a fair rat hunt when other game was inadmissible. But Mary spared from her love for

the Warren a sort of indulgent fondness for Sandford, the more decided that nobody else liked the place in itself, not even Mr. Carteret, who shared many of Mary's tastes for the good reason that she had derived them from him. Mary had a mind of her own, and was quite capable of liking and knowing that she liked something that nobody else, not even her father, cared for.

Inside the house the unusual space was the only recommendation, even to Mary, of the great rambling dining room and best parlour, in which the farmer-proprietor must have seen himself dispensing refreshment to the members of parish ploughing matches, or receiving deputations from agricultural societies, or holding coroner's inquests. The rooms were not mellowed by age, and were but scantily furnished with some fixtures of clumsy table, sideboard, and screen left behind by the aspiring farmer, and by the least valued and the most thoroughly faded and dilapidated of such curtains, carpets, and chairs as could be spared from the Warren. Still Mary protested that the space was a great deal in itself, in order to feel not like a crow in the mist—she did not admit that—or an inhabitant of the long, chill, bare common room of a workhouse or penitentiary, but rather like a free independent member of society, who could busy herself with her own occupations and think her own thoughts within the same four walls as the others, and yet be out of earshot of them.

Mary was not slow in introducing to Mrs. Penfeather Kit Must and his mother, who were the custodians of the farmhouse. A young girl taken from the parish charity school and continually leaving to be replaced by another hand-maiden could not be reckoned among the fixtures and the responsible members of the establishment. The Musts occupied the front and back kitchens, which were not in proportion to the size of the dining-room and parlour, but there were ample dairy, cheese, and apple rooms included in the offices.

The mother and son could be best judged of together, and with their respective qualities throwing up, as it were, their complementary merits. Mrs. Must was by no means the principal in point of worth and use; but she had so impressed her superiority on her son, her charity girl for the time being, and even on Mr. Carteret and Mary, that her portrait ought to be drawn first. She had been an upper servant in a family of good position and had married out of it a substantial tradesman in a country village. In these circumstances she had been a perfectly exemplary woman. But things had not gone well with Mrs. Must; indeed, they had gone so very ill that she had succumbed to them. By the time her husband was dead, his business gone, and her elder child had turned out badly, she was capable of doing nothing but sitting and bearing testimony to her forlorn respectability, and bewailing her change of

estate. She had saved some wrecks from her earlier prosperity. She was content to eke out a bare existence on these, together with such wages as Kit could earn from his earliest years—not a penny or an hour having been saved for the boy's education.

The consequence was that Kit, a thoughtful, diligent child of whom something could have been made, grew up in profound ignorance, only lightened as he advanced towards manhood by his own eccentric efforts to remedy the deficiency.

Kit Must possessed a natural gift, an instinctive, wellnigh unerring, perception of every feature and change in the natural world. He got the credit when he grew up of being peculiarly skilled, or 'skilly' according to local language, in the signs of the weather, the prospects of the crops, the points of a horse, a sheep, or a pig—the degree of health or sickness, fat or leanness, to be attained by these animals. Without this deserved reputation he would have been as poverty-stricken and clownish as any labourer in the kingdom; yet Kit Must was exactly of the stuff of which out of date, patient weather prophets, herbalists, and bone-setters were made.

He was poor enough when Mr. Carteret encountered him, conceived a high opinion of his natural sagacity in a particular direction, and gradually promoted him till he became bailiff at Sandford. His elevation had answered perfectly,

unless the little difficulty of Kit's proving tyrannical to his subjects, with regard to whom he had lately been the inferior, and over whose scratched, shaken, and resisting heads he had been raised.

It was a repetition, with variations, of the dignified historical case of Rudolph of Hapsburg and the King of Bohemia, in whose household the elected emperor had once acted as steward. More than one rustic king of Bohemia again pledged and lost crown and kingdom—that is, cartwhip, harness, and three-roomed cottage—rather than submit to what was inevitable in the shape of a parvenu emperor or bailiff. But time cured the discontent ; especially as Kit, though despotic, was not unjust.

Kit Must had entertained no thought save that 'owd mother' was to derive the chief social benefit from his rise in life, and be restored, as far as he could restore her, to the privileges which had been forfeited by no fault of his, even as the foundation of his prosperity had been laid by no exertion of hers. For her not eminently deserving sake, while many more self-sacrificing mothers are forsaken and forgotten, Kit faithfully forswore the charms that might have existed for him in any woman, buxom or blythe, among his compeers.

'Owd mother, she allus would 'ave the best that was agoin, even when we was at the wust,' her son would say in unconscious satire and even with a grain of admiration. 'She would never

put up with no trash of meat nor clothin' if she could help it. It was none for her ; she couldn't abide it ; it didn't come natral to her as it did to me, and as it do to amost of your common folk. She had a spirit of her own, had owd mother, and main proud she's been, and the best that she could get she would 'ave, come from where it liked. "Dearest is cheapest in the end," she would say, though, dang it, it often bet me how dearest were to be got ; but she got it, she did, in a way, at the wust ; and it would be hard if she hadn't her ease and power to prank herself at this time of day.'

Therefore ' owd mother,' after rising from the poorest cottage room of all those to which she had sunk, through a succession of better rooms and cottages, was transferred at last to the comfortable quarters and the dignity which belonged to the housekeeper of the bailiff at Sandford. There she sat, as she had sat in her adversity, tidy as she had always contrived to be in her own person, which had a certain prized air of gentility about it, and was ministered to and waited upon by Kit and the charity girl—as long as the last could stand the combined imperiousness of Kit and the airs and exactions of his mother. It was only when any of the Carterets were at Sandford that Mrs. Must, who was fairly able-bodied and not much above sixty years of age, bestirred herself to furnish them with service. On this occasion she received Mary and Mrs. Penfeather with Mrs.

Must's peculiar, pensive blandness. She referred very slightly to the changes in prospect. She mentioned them entirely as they affected the Squire's family with regard to the fatigue and trouble which they would undergo in travelling and the inferior accommodation they would have to put up with. Yet she gave Mary a sense that Mr. Carteret had been the means of injuring Mrs. Must, and that it was only Mrs. Must's magnanimity which overlooked the injury.

Kit was totally unlike the straight-backed, long-nosed, tight-mouthed, ornamental piece of humanity who, in her little shawl and mittens and very white cap, had continued to impose her burden, and secure her compensation, in sympathy and consideration, from relations, neighbours, and masters throughout her career.

Kit had been ill-grown in his youth from the want of the nourishment which had gone to keep his mother erect, fresh coloured, and smooth skinned. Now, in early middle age, he was round in the back and bald in the head, while his irregular-featured face was gaunt, tanned, and puckered all over with premature wrinkles. Of course his life in the open air, in all kinds of weather, had contributed to this result, while it had added a faint reflection of a wild hunter's freedom, together with his shyness and rudeness, to Kit's demeanour.

Like most self-educated men, he was onesided and positive, full of cranks and crotchets on the

surface. His mother, on the contrary, who was always apologising for Kit, while she herself was one-sided enough, certainly, in her own egotism made allowance for the egotism of others. She was smooth-spoken, and had much tact wherewith to insinuate quietly her merits and sufferings and the deserts which were at last crowned with an approach to their due. She rather looked than spoke her claims. But these looks of venerable old-world gentility, which had survived so many rubs, were patent not only over an uncultivated son, who had never failed to revere her—even when in his uncouth manners he spoke most roughly to her, but over the people who half distrusted Mrs. Must. Mr. Carteret, Mary, the very Fra—though she voted the obstacle an unmitigated bore—would not trouble Mrs. Must more than they could help when they were over at Sandford; while they all laughed at and put down Kit in his cross, blundering, blunt objections and assumptions.

But then Kit—weather-worn to the degree that he was, weather-soiled with a soil which no soap and water could remove—when he meant to be better got up than usual, in an old shooting coat of his master's which was much too long in the back and arms for the present wearer, and which did not suit well with Kit's own coarse corduroys and gaiters, and standing with his legs far apart—one leg bandy—shifting his two feet as he was apt to do, was far from an imposing figure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WOMAN'S SIDE OF THE QUESTION.

MARY set herself to take down Kit's accounts the very first thing after a farmhouse tea, as she and her companion had agreed, in consideration of the Sandford staff and larder, to make the late lunch before they left the Warren serve for both lunch and dinner. She knew the process of account-taking was one of trouble and elaboration, and that Kit would be exceedingly restive, not to say refractory, if she kept him from his outdoor work next morning to go through the ceremony.

In Kit's mind accounts, like 'glad meetings round the joyous hearth,' were only for the evening, and were beneath a man's notice when the weightier matters of wheat or turnip hoeing, or sheep shearing, call him forth with the sunrise.

Kit would not be disturbed in his routine, or budge from his habits for Mary's father, far less for Mary. It is but justice to the widely extended chivalry of working England to explain that in the eyes of Kit Must, who held his own mother in unbounded, credulous reverence, Mary was only

the Squire's daughter—a somewhat capable young lady for a young lady, but owing that and everything besides to her father.

Mary sat at her father's desk with the thumbed, crumpled up pass-books in which Kit indited his hieroglyphics and compassed, by strange and fearful devices, his original ideas of sums, spread out before her.

Kit, like a wild man of the woods, only without the slenderest particle of the dignity and grace attributed to that dying out denizen of society, stood shifting his feet at her elbow, and stubbornly refusing to avail himself of a chair, while he condescended to throw light on the obscurity of what were, however, his conscientiously and carefully kept records.

Mrs. Penfeather sat in the further corner of the shadowy room, watching the sunset, wondering how long it was since she had seen, or if she had ever before been in such a world of corn and corn-rails, and catching fragments of Mary's abjurations and remonstrances addressed to her subordinate.

Kit was chronically huffy during these necessary explanations, and Mary had a fancy that he felt himself degraded by being compelled to make them to a woman. When she had acted as her father's substitute on the former occasion referred to, her father had been present, lending his countenance to the transaction, and re-

moving from Kit the stigma of working on an equality, if not as an inferior, in dealings with a woman. To work for a woman Kit could understand; he had done that since he could gather sticks or herd cows, and had consented to it with gruff cheerfulness. He had also marshalled and ruled over women, and found them unbearably troublesome subordinates as field labourers, but to have business with a woman as a mistress, was an unnatural operation.

Mary, though she was in general a good deal influenced by the moods of her associates, was in temporary high spirits. She had been more or less sad of late. This little visit to Sandford was like an interregnum in the heavy trial of leaving the Warren, though Sandford too was to be left. She was exhilarated by her piece of work; she was amused by Kit's access of gloom and crustiness.

'What are these signs, Kit?' called Mary, pointing with her white taper fingers to a vilely blotted column, 'and what could you mean by subtracting that second row from the first?'

'These be sevens and noins as plain as paint, Miss,' complained Kit, in the deeply resentful tone of a gravely insulted man, who puts a force upon himself to the extent of enduring the insult. 'In coorse these are the row of tippences and thrip-pences I had to take off to leave the shillings as was complete.'

‘Oh, that is it! but why did you not think of adding them, and dividing the whole by twelve?’

‘I dessay it would a’ come to the same thing,’ granted Kit, with a mixture of candour and scorn; ‘but if my plan answered, were’nt that enough? Where were the use—I never seed it—on altering it?’

‘To preserve unanimity of arithmetic—to enable your fellow-creatures to read your reckoning—unless you mean to hold it in cipher for a perpetuity,’ said Mary in the intervals of her own summing up; and then she said, a little exasperatingly, ‘there, I have brought it to the same total by the time-honoured regular method; isn’t it rather clever of me?’

Suddenly Kit turned upon her. ‘I don’t know what your cleverness is worth, Miss, when it ain’t no good to the Squire—not to keep him in his own house and on his own lands. I mean, if you had been a working man’s daughter, and had got a stout pair of shoulders and arms, you might a’ done a turn by his side in the fields, at the dung spreading, or the wheat hoeing, or the tossing of the hay—though it is as like as not you would have had some other end to serve—and so saved him from being sent adrift in his age, out of his hole of a cottage where he meant to end his days, when he was ceasing to be the value of his hire, low as that was—and small blame to anybody—bailiff mun do his dooty, and farmer, aye,

and landlord mun live—though your father couldn't see it, not in time. If you had been a tradesman's daughter you might have balanced his books by your way on it, after working hours, and stood behind the counter when his pins were agrowing stiff; but being a young lady as well as a woman, what 'ave you been able to do? Well, you might 'ave married a rich gentleman, as would 'ave been as good as a bank to the Squire; but that you 'ant done, so where's the room for bragging,' ended Kit, with a sour grin.

It was altogether unfair, as it was illogical, and not a little mean, in Kit Must—that mingled slave and autocrat where women were concerned—first to be mortally offended with Mary for her being sent to bring his accounts into trim, and then to reproach her with what was the bane of her life and the root of bitterness in her heart, her uselessness as a rational and educated woman to her father and her kind.

Mrs. Penfeather had caught the man's harsh untutored accents, and turned to look at Mary and listen for her reply. 'Mr. Carteret would never have taken such aid as that you propose. You don't understand, Kit,' she said, with womanly pride; and then her head sank a little, and she added, 'but you are right that I am not of much help, though I can go over your accounts in ordinary schoolboy fashion. Pray let us go on with them now.'

Mrs. Penfeather saw that Mary's equanimity had been disturbed and her gaiety dispersed. When Kit was dismissed, she came and stood beside Mrs. Penfeather looking out at the deepening blue and green which, now that the sunset glow had died out in the west, the May twilight brought to the blue and the green, in the sky above and the fields below, and which was all around them until the 'soft obscure' of night became purple in the heavens and a dim sea-green in the fields.

But Mary was not attending to the peculiar attractions of the scene ; she was full, as youth is apt to be, of her own troubled conflicting emotions and unworked out destiny.

'Don't you think that Kit Must or any man may be glad that he is not a woman,' she broke out, unable to resist the chance of shocking her mother's old friend.

'Women are as God made them,' said Mrs. Penfeather, in quiet reproof and seeking to try the girl. 'If they have not the power, they have not the burden And, do you know, I think that in all the soft lamentations uttered by that pretty—she is a very pretty old woman—downstairs, who has been *passée* for half a century, and who is only so far an impostor that she has thoroughly imposed upon herself as well as upon her Caliban, there has never been included this particular piece of pity for herself—which is also

beyond remedy—that she had not been born a labouring man with his drudgery and coarseness.’

Mary did not show that she caught the sly humour of Mrs. Penfeather’s meaning; her heart was too full, and of a subject too near to her, for such treatment. ‘Did God create women with but half a head, or without a hand, or in any conspicuous way maimed and dwarfed?’ she went on, uttering her own thoughts. ‘Why does God make families in which the sons are all sickly and the daughters strong? or where the girls are shrewd and capable and the boys simple and soft?’

‘I cannot tell, Mary, unless that these contradictions may not after all proceed from God’s ordinance—permitted by Him of course they must be.’

‘It is a great mystery and difficulty,’ said Mary, folding her hands with a sigh. ‘All the wise men of this generation do not seem to be able to solve the question—if they ever care to consider it—of what is to be done with the thousands and thousands of single women who will never be the doubles of so many men, who cannot work because there is no work provided for them, or because they have not been trained for such work as they can find, and who cannot starve—that is bodily, for multitudes of them have to starve mentally.’

‘Perhaps some Mr. Plinsol will rise up to their rescue,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, wickedly.

‘Don’t laugh, Mrs. Penfeather,’ said Mary, administering a mild rebuke in her turn. ‘Perhaps women had better bring themselves at once to beg humbly—not for bread alone, but for a life worthy to be lived, from their fellow-men.’

‘And in doing so don’t let them forget that they are women,’ said Mrs. Penfeather. ‘Don’t you see, Mary, that it is the very womanliness—though it is by no means the higher order of womanliness—which has recommended such a woman as Mrs. Must, in her dignity and daintiness, to such a man as her son?’

‘Mrs. Penfeather,’ Mary began again impulsively, after a pause of some moments, emboldened to be confidential by the conviction that Mrs. Penfeather, with her reservations, her fun which had survived so much, and her warnings, had some sympathy with her young companion, ‘I do not know whether I am low minded or revolutionary; mamma says the last, though of course she does not mean it quite ——’

‘No,’ said Mrs. Penfeather coolly, ‘and there is no occasion for your calling yourself hard names.’

‘Yes; but I do wish I had been born a working woman, in what people call the lower class; I have envied such a woman many a time. She knows what she has to do, whether it is in working a sewing-machine, or scrubbing a floor, or cooking a dinner, or, like one of the women under Kit here, labouring in the fields. She can do it

with all her might. She has not an idle or a long hour ; she can help herself and she can help her neighbours. There is not a doubt about it that she is a real boon to her family, and of use in God's world. She has the satisfaction of her own conscience, and the pleasure, the joy of service, when it is for those she loves. Ah ! she is a happy woman.'

'What, Mary ! without the time or the opportunity for self-improvement, often overworked and underpaid, knocked about, harassed, oppressed ? Child, I have seen women in some parts—not of India alone, but of enlightened Christian Germany—who were condemned to work like beasts of burden, carrying huge burdens on their backs, digging the ground, acting as scavengers in the public streets.'

'I believe I could come not to mind that,' said Mary desperately ; 'I am sure I had rather be a beast of burden than a human butterfly.'

'You don't know what you are saying,' said Mrs. Penfeather, somewhat in the tone of Mary's mother.

'Oh, Mrs. Penfeather,' cried Mary passionately again, 'the weariness, the inanity, the demoralising, degrading effect of having no defined purpose in life ! Do you think—I am sure you don't—that the self-improvement of which you speak is consistent with such a state of things ? Do you call self-improvement bringing one's self, after hecatombs of hours sacrificed to the end, to play and sing a little

better, or to have read a little more solid history or French or German than one's neighbours?'

'My dear, I am afraid you are revolutionary. Do you imagine that every man or woman should work with his or her hands? Have you been reading Mr. Ruskin?'

'No—yes,' replied Mary; 'I don't desire a universal return to handicraft; I have no notion that the solution of the woman puzzle lies, as some men and one woman would have it, in our being converted into a uniform lot of cooks and housemaids. I have often read Mr. Ruskin with pleasure and profit, and sometimes with bewilderment; but he has nothing to do with my present argument. I am speaking from my own convictions, my own experience. You are laughing again, Mrs. Penfeather,' said Mary, a little affronted.

'Don't grudge me my laugh,' said Mrs. Penfeather, with a shade of unconscious pathos in the request. 'I was only saying to myself that convictions are mature and experience extensive at the age of twenty-four. Why, I am no more the same woman I was at that age, though your good mother thinks I am, than I am a begum, or a padrona, or a Mrs. Court Councillor.'

'And I dare say I shall be something different also when I have attained twice my present years; but it is of the present I am thinking, it is the present that is of most consequence to me now.'

'No doubt.'

‘And a great many excellent religious people,’ continued Mary, carried away by her excitement, ‘would tell me I ought not to be without a purpose; it ought to be more than sufficient for me to love my God, obey my parents, and help my neighbours; and these duties I can always at least seek to do, however imperfectly, in whatever station or circumstances. But how can I love God properly and lead the idle objectless life which I am sure He never meant any responsible human being to lead? If I obey my parents it is but a barren obedience. You know mamma is a busy active woman, and disinclined naturally to give up her own duties into the hands of another, and that other I fear a far more incompetent person. I can do absolutely nothing for papa in his cares and worries, except be an additional burden to him.’ There was a break in Mary’s voice as she said this which she was fain to conceal, so she hurried on, pretending to make a jest in the end—the very line of conduct for which she had been censuring Mrs. Penfeather. ‘Tennyson says—

“Go teach the orphan boy to read,
And teach the orphan girl to sew.”

The orphan boys and girls near the Warren belong to the rector of the parish, to the charity schoolmistress, and to a committee of efficient ladies of whom mamma is one. With how many much better qualified people’s prior rights must I not interfere—while I have no funds at my disposal to

warrant the interference—what mischief may not I in my ignorance do, if I seize upon all the orphan boys and girls in the parish simply as a refuge from my idleness! Besides, ought not charity to begin at home? Whoever seriously recommended an idle young man, even if he were a gentleman, to betake himself to charity for an occupation? I suppose that is one reason,’ added Mary, illogical in her bitterness, ‘why sons are more welcome, even though their education and outfit are so much more expensive—though the army and the navy, the bar and the church are overcrowded and no longer the openings which they once were, while the mercantile world demands capital for strange adventurers. The colonies, as poor mamma feels, are far away; still, as I said, sons are welcome both in the estimation of the inner circle at home and the outer circle of friends and acquaintances, while daughters are accepted with tender resignation or veiled condolence as so many helpless burdens.’

‘Are you afraid that the time will come when we shall adopt the infanticide which we have stamped out in our eastern empire? Listen to me, dear; it would have been a great consolation to me in my early widowhood if I had been left, poor as I was, with a baby, a living representative of my young husband—do you wonder that I, so spare and grey, should call Hugh Penfeather young? he will always be young to me. I would have given a good

deal for a boy; but I would have given all that I possessed for a girl.'

'But you were a widow and a woman yourself,' said Mary naïvely enough. 'Now, don't you think, Mrs. Penfeather, that, among working people, husband and wife alike must be as glad when a daughter as when a son is born? for the girl is born to as much independence as the boy, and she can often be as great a stay and support to her parents as her brother can be. In higher ranks, rich men—whether they are dukes or earls or simply professional men, may have it in their power to rejoice freely over their little daughters. But the poor man, let him be a nobleman or a country doctor, who has been endowed by Providence with six or eight daughters and no means of providing for them, save by procuring for them the chance of marrying, how can he, if he have any unselfish forethought, be a proud and happy man when he looks on his train of girls?'

Mrs. Penfeather was looking curiously at Mary.

'Don't you know, Mary,' she asked, 'that you are the greatest—one of the greatest comforts of your father's life, only by being his dear daughter, his friend and companion, a polished shaft in his temple, and a solace for all his troubles? Are you guilty of fancying that a father's love is bought by the immunity from care, or the future benefits which his children can confer on him?'

‘No, indeed!’ exclaimed Mary, half indignantly; but she forgot the momentary offence in the interest which the subject possessed for her. ‘Yet, should not benefits, in the children’s interest and for their own sake, be more reciprocal? Think how happy papa and I would have been if he had been a bailiff like Kit Must, or a blacksmith or a carpenter! I am always provoking you to laugh; but I think I would have preferred to have had him a bailiff or a small farmer, which is more easily imagined when the original is a squire. Then my health and strength, and any amount of sense I have, with Fra’s cleverness and Lyd’s docility, would all have been so much available material for papa. Then his quiver would have been full of arrows, in the Psalmist’s phrase, and he need not have become the poorest of his neighbours, forced to give in at last. In that case we might have worked for him so effectually as to win all back. I am sure mamma would have been as happy as the day is long—though she might blame me for speaking treason at this moment—far happier than she is at present; working out her household arrangements without a servant to mar them, and with so much of our comfort and prosperity depending on her success. She would have been successful; everything would have been well ordered. We girls might have entered into a worthy rivalry to see which could be the

most industrious or skilful and gain the most. I would have chosen to remain at home and to work at papa's side, if possible—out in the fields there, or in the barn or stackyard, or among the cows or calves, for I have always been fond of animals; and I could have seen when papa's health began to fail, and would have spared him every exertion that was too much for him. Even to go out into the world would not have been bad if it had been to work for myself and those at home—always to keep that in mind, with the holiday seasons—how bright and sweet they would have been to look forward to! Mrs. Penfeather, I believe almost any kind of honest work would be better than no work.'

'My child, I do not wonder that you envy working women if you can call up such pictures—perfect unless in this, that they resemble those portraits of herself which Queen Elizabeth approved of because of their very defect, that they were without shade. Girls did not make such pictures when I was young, though I think I have heard that French girls did in their fantastic fashion, copying Frenchmen in the same line, just before the great revolution. You may take that as a warning or not, just as you please. But my girl-days do not go back to anything so grand and grim as a revolution; only to some Chartist riots, and to the first talk of the first Exhibition. Even then girls married more

frequently and at an earlier age than they marry now. Their education had not progressed to such a satisfactory completeness that they should begin to go back and ask to what it tended, and to study afresh its first principles. I do not imagine any girl among my contemporaries ever enquired what all her music-practising, and French and Italian reading would come to ; and that, while music as a science was only dawning on English musicians and foreign travel was much rarer than it is now. We were engrossed by the details and seldom ventured beyond them. We were persuaded that, after going to church, saying our prayers, and honouring our father and mother, to thrum so many hours on our pianos or drudge with our classics and their dictionaries was highly meritorious. For anything more, to have a class in the vicar's school, to be punctual in our appearance and exertions there, and to attend to social obligations in the matter of morning calls and dinners—for balls were not obligations, they were splendid privileges and possibilities—formed the whole duty of young women. I have a faint idea that we considered ourselves most virtuous and exemplary in the performance of our duty. I know that we were a great deal more contented than you girls are, and that I would rather have been born—one of your questions was how, if not where, we would have ourselves born—in my generation than in yours. Inasmuch as we acted up to our light,

it seems to me that we deserved our serenity. But I do not pretend to say whether or not our light was but a farthing candle light ; or whether the ferment that exists among our successors, which no lectures and no laughter suffice to still, is simply the sign of a transition period out of which will result higher harmony.'

There was a long silence till darkness—all the darkness of a summer night—had begun to descend on the couple at the open window of the farmhouse.

Then Mary suddenly broke out again, and fired a parting shot. 'Mrs. Penfeather,' she boldly said, 'I allowed that rich men, dukes or merchant-princes—but let them be princes of the blood royal at once if you like—were at liberty to delight in their goodly groups of daughters. We are, on the whole and taken together, pleasant to look upon in our youth ; our worst enemy won't deny, rather insists provokingly on that, as if it were the best of us, on the 'Turkish principle. However, I do not envy these rich men's daughters with their fathers—free in one sense to be as idle as they like, to think of nothing save their own pleasure, that most wearisome, dreariest thought to anyone fit—and we are all fit—for something infinitely nobler.'

'Now hush, Mary,' said Mrs. Penfeather ; 'I do not say that you are not speaking the truth. But you have spoken quite enough treason for one night,

and you have disturbed me in listening, in the quietness that may be felt here, to a peculiar serenade. All the farm-house noises—the clucking and gobbling of late hens, geese, and ducks, the lowing of calves demanding to be fed, the jingling of bridles, the stamping of hoofs, and the voices of workpeople returning from their day's work—have ceased, one by one, hours ago. A little breeze has risen, and there is an audible accompaniment to my thoughts. It is not like the monotonous break of the waves in all kinds of weather, at the full height of the tide, on the shore; neither is it like the continued cracking, swinging, and swishing of trees in a wood, even in an incipient storm; it is a fitful and yet often-repeated rustling, like the stirring of angels' wings all around us.'

'It is the night wind coming and going among the corn,' said Mary.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOUSEKEEPER OF THE MANAGER OF THE SECRET
WORKS AND THE MANAGER IN HIS OWN PERSON.

THE next day the weather was still fine, and favourable for Mary's survey. She managed it by driving out herself and Mrs. Penfeather—slowly, to spare Mrs. Penfeather's bones and to enable Mary to make her inspection—in the Whitechapel cart.

Kit Must was, in his own opinion, better engaged, which was, on the whole, to the ladies' relief; for Kit's grudging presence and pioneership would have been a shadow on the expedition, and might have had a damping effect on Mary's powers of observation. They went along and across all the cartroads which intersected the farm. Mary occasionally handed the reins and the whip to her friend—who took them under protest and with fear and trembling—and wrote a remark in a note-book, even sketched a post awry, the serious gap in a hedge, or some damage done to a young plantation. Happily the pony was elderly and staid, and its freight met with no misadventure.

Mary was full of importance, and strove to be

exact, while Mrs. Penfeather humoured her by supplying hints and refraining from interruptions.

The two had returned from their examination, which had lasted all the morning. Mary was speculating whether she might, without invading the kind of dignity made up of merit and long and well-borne misfortune which hedged in Mrs. Must, beg her to hurry the early dinner, when a double knock, of all sounds, was heard at the front door, which stood already invitingly open.

‘Who can it be?’ cried Mary. ‘What visitor can we possibly have? We know the Dennisons over at Winstanley, but I understood that they had gone to the South of France for Laura Dennison’s health. Mrs. Must has just told me that the new rector is celebrating his second marriage in Yorkshire, and we had a glimpse of the doctor’s brougham bowling along the high road on his usual round. I cannot imagine who is there.’

‘You need not trouble your imagination; here he or she comes,’ said Mrs. Penfeather in an undertone, as Mrs. Must’s charity-school girl—not Mrs. Must herself, the visitor was not deserving of that mark of honour—opened the door, and walking in first, stood for a moment goggle-eyed, in mute appeal, and then retreated rapidly before a nameless stranger.

The stranger was a she, a young lady apparently about the age of Mary Carteret, but dressed in the more youthful fashion of Mary’s sisters. For

Mary, partly from natural taste, and partly out of consideration for the six years' seniority constantly dangled before her eyes, affected a little sobriety, especially in her walking dress; she inclined to jackets instead of Marie Antoinette fichus, and adopted larger hats, which were for use as well as for ornament.

The fashionably fastidiously dressed young lady was not pretty at the first glance; she had too long a nose, and she was sallow, with a sallowness not redeemed by the sandy hue of her hair. But she was handsome in figure; and her clothes, if they were too *prononcé* in their cut, were well fitting and of well-chosen materials and colours—a summer muslin gown of a delicate buff colour, and a thin scarlet shawl wound plaid fashion about her, with a little black and white hat having the white wing of some sea-bird in it, on the small well-set head. As for the minor touches which belong to high-heeled kid boots and French grey kid gloves, they were so fine as to have the air of being as sedulously studied as the rest of the dress, but were inappropriate to the situation. Mary glanced quickly at her chamois garden gloves and leather boots, first in dismay and then in complacence.

There were ease and self-mastery about the whole face and figure, which told not so much of training as of accuracy—and conscious accuracy in

knowledge with regard to what she could do and what she wanted—in the individual.

‘I must announce myself,’ she said, with a perfectly natural laugh which was neither forward nor bashful, and as if the process was strange but not too difficult for her. ‘I am Alice Honeywood. I live at Gorebridge Cottage, at the end of the village. My brother is at present acting as manager for the company who have the chemical works and are tenants of Mr. Carteret. I believe that I have the pleasure of speaking to Miss Carteret.’

Mary said yes, she was Miss Carteret, and she was glad to see Miss Honeywood; then she mentioned Mrs. Penfeather. It might not be a usage of society to introduce people who met by chance as these two people met, but Mary rapidly considered that it ought to set Miss Honeywood more at ease. Being by her visitor’s own tale the social superior, Mary felt it the bounden duty of her superiority to set the stranger still more at ease than she was already.

At the same time Mary cogitated whether there really existed any obligation in the fact which Miss Honeywood had stated, of her being the sister of the manager of Mr. Carteret’s tenants in the chemical works, which could render it incumbent on her to call and Mary to receive the call during a stay of two days’ duration at Sandford.

Miss Honeywood clearly divined the argument

for and against her presence in the waste space of the Sandford best parlour, as it was passing through Mary's mind.

'I have an apology to make for my intrusion,' she said, readily, and with the grace which accompanies fluency and self-possession. 'I was at school at Miss Bradshaw's, Ivy Lodge, before I came here to keep house for my brother, I ventured to hope that you could tell me something of dear old Miss Bradshaw and my schoolfellows.'

'It was my sisters, and not I, who were at Miss Bradshaw's. I am sorry they are not here to give you the information you wish,' said Mary, feeling her sincerity more and more tried. She was in doubt whether either Fra or Lyd would have seen herself compelled to answer the pressing questions of one of those half-boarders, of secondary and debatable rank, with regard to whom Mary had heard Fra—while descanting on the select character of Miss Bradshaw's school—regret that the schoolmistress should make an exception.

'But perhaps you may be able to give me some news,' said Alice Honeywood, entreatingly. 'Letters are so unsatisfactory, and school friends soon get bad correspondents, which is a pity for those who have few other correspondents,' she added, with a little sigh. 'You will forgive me for coming. I was so pleased to hear that you were at Sandford.'

The artlessness was not assumed. Alice

Honeywood was a mixture of art and artlessness ; or rather the art was so consummate that it had become second nature and worked like an impulse. Mary ceased to question whether Alice Honeywood had any right to be glad or sorry that members of the Squire's family were at Sandford. She said sincerely there was nothing to forgive, while she added, with an involuntary smile, that her stay and that of her friend at Sandford was to be so short—just two days, she was afraid it could not warrant any human being in feeling either sad or glad.

‘Just two days!’ Alice Honeywood repeated, with such real regret in her accents that Mary Carteret, a friendly woman by instinct, could not fail to be drawn to her. ‘I am so sorry ; I fancied that you had come over for a week or two at the very least. I knew that the family were going abroad ; but I hoped that Mr. Carteret would pay a parting visit to Sandford, and I believed that you were his *avant-coureurs*. To have any members of the family staying at the farm, as I was told you did at odd times, would have been such a boon to my brother and me. And there you have never come since we arrived, and we are losing you, I may say, before we have found you.’

This last proposition was so self-evident that Mary felt at liberty to laugh outright, and the open laugh established yet greater cordiality between her and her guest. Still the conversation

must have languished, since Mary, rake her brains as obligingly as she might, could not at second hand have furnished much return to Miss Honeywood for her cross-examination on Miss Bradshaw's school, had not Alice shown herself—in proportion as her anxiety for tidings of her former home and companions gave way before her hostess's incapacity to supply them—a person of considerable independent conversational powers.

She was not brilliant like Fra, but neither was she eccentric and not to be counted on for what she might say next; a sense of safety, generally the more acceptable experience of the two, supplied the place of the brilliance. Her words flowed on in a frank, light, agreeable prattle, simple but not silly, principally of her own small world and its concerns, to be sure, but with a composed confidence in her hearer's interest in what she said which had the effect of inspiring that interest. The equable, moderately amusing volubility might be too much sometimes; one might not be in the mood for it and so be tempted to weigh the substance, which would be a dangerous process; but it was certainly a great resource on a first meeting. Mary had an impression while she listened that it might be an abiding resource in various ordinary and extraordinary circumstances of social life. When people were careless and coveted only to be entertained;

when minds were jaded and weary with the labour and strain of over thought and over work and wanted to be gently diverted from themselves; when the wheels of life rolled heavily and threatened disaster from which there was no escape and for which there was only endurance, then no doubt Alice Honeywood's cheerful, spontaneous, skimming-the-surface sort of talk had its use and value.

Alice told her two auditors—generously reversing the position of the ladies, as it seemed to Mary, and constituting herself the entertainer of her hostess without any trouble to her—a considerable amount of harmless, rather enlivening gossip within half-an-hour. Alice had come to Gorebridge Cottage when she had left school and immediately after her brother had accepted the post of manager of the works. Gorebridge Cottage was, as Mary readily admitted from her own knowledge, very pretty, although it was no larger than a pigeon-hole. Here, in Sandford farmhouse, Alice could breathe, could move her elbows. But the worst of Gorebridge Cottage was that it was dreadfully dull. Yes, to be sure, there were the rector and the doctor—the latter with a family—both resident in the village, as well as herself and her brother, but that was not much, was it?

The rector had been constantly absent in Yorkshire, paying suit to the lady who had at last

accepted it. People did allege that he had proposed four times and borne four rejections without feeling seriously offended or even daunted. Now that he had won his prize—who, by the way, had, in addition to her other charms, a property in the south of Yorkshire—it was said she was so fond of her place and her friends in the neighbourhood that she would still detain the rector as much as she decently could in her Riding.

The doctor with his family went to chapel, and though they were very respectable people otherwise, that was trying, was it not?

As for the members of the company holding the works—if they could have been reckoned, they were all at a distance, city men, who only came down themselves once or twice a year, and kept their families in suburban villas near London.

Without any direct intimation to that effect, Alice Honeywood's conversation was calculated to produce the impression that she and her brother had undergone a fall in the social ranks, though the brother and sister were too brave and bright to murmur at the fall.

‘I get on very well, though it is dull,’ she bore an encouraging testimony; ‘in summer I have my flowers, and in winter I have my work and our club books—we have a book club which is a credit to the doctor, who is secretary—and I have my music at all seasons. I am glad to say the Czar,

that is my brother—I name him the Czar because he is an absolute sovereign—is not liable to be called away at all hours, and monopolised by his profession. He has his laboratory at the works ; but eight hours a day suffices as a rule for his experiments. It is well, I tell him, else he would become the blue or the green man from a ruined complexion, or lose his head and blow the whole place up. He is not in perpetual danger of being taken out just when dinner is on the table, or when we have begun to try our new duet, and he has not yet been tempted as far as Yorkshire in pursuit of a reluctant old flame !’

(‘ I dare say that is a happy brother and sister,’ commented Mrs. Penfeather, in her own thoughts ; ‘ she speaks of him so gaily. But it is not because his habits are the reverse of tyrannical that she calls him the Czar. That is too far-fetched a piece of affectation, and she is not foolishly affected.’)

Miss Honeywood’s talk was so frank that there was no impertinence, there was rather good-natured interest, in Mrs. Penfeather’s spoken rejoinder to the last remark. ‘ Your brother must be too young for old flames. He has probably still to encounter his first flame, which will very likely reduce him to ashes at once.’

Alice Honeywood, in the middle of her complacency, looked sharply up at Mrs. Penfeather ; then she recovered herself and said, with a nod, ‘ And there will be the end of my reign with the Czar ; a

Czarina will rule in my stead, and I shall have to accept the usual fate of devoted sisters, be thrust into the background and pensioned with a penny.'

('Poor girl, I dare say she is dependent on her brother,' Mrs. Penfeather pursued her thoughts, 'and I have unwittingly dealt her a home thrust by suggesting an unwelcome probability.')

It was Mary who was at fault next. 'I should not think that you would be at a great loss for employment,' she said, meditatively, recurring to the earlier gist of the conversation. She spoke with the utmost simplicity, while full of her own theories, which predisposed her to envy Miss Honeywood for her more definite sphere and greater opportunity for real work. 'If you are your brother's house-keeper and he has nobody save you, with very likely few, and those not very competent servants—Mrs. Must has just been complaining of the uselessness of the charity-school girls—no doubt a great deal of work devolves on you, and you can make puddings—perhaps even bread fit to be eaten—set rooms in order, and help with the doing up of your own clothes,' said Mary, with a sort of regretful approval.

Alice Honeywood was not easily put out, and had determined not to be put out. She had come to Sandford resolved not only to be agreeable herself, but to find—nay, to force—the others to be agreeable in their turn. The Carterets of the Warren were poor—ergo proud. Fra, as Alice

had learnt by experience was a domineering girl. Nevertheless, Alice Honeywood stared now with her grey eyes—the best feature in her face. Was it the elder sister, Mary, and not Fra, who coolly intended to be insulting, in her father's house too? Was Mary Carteret indulging in an ill-timed jest? Was she crazy? Where was the explanation? Alice Honeywood could not seek it further at that moment; she could only turn aside the unprovoked accusation on Mary's part of common, middle-class, almost plebeian usefulness, with the little protest, 'Oh dear, no; I am not at all what old-fashioned folk used to describe as notable—it is intensely funny for me to see myself in that character—the Czar does not require it of me. We have an old housekeeper of the rector's, who takes care of the cottage and, I must confess, of both the Czar and me admirably. I cannot say that I hear her complain of the housemaid, whatever Mrs. Must may do. Indeed, I believe Hardy does not go to the charity school for her assistants, whom I always allow her to select, as of course she knows best.'

Mary's countenance fell, while Mrs. Penfeather had difficulty in commanding hers. 'I declare that godchild of mine must have a spice of genius,' the elder woman was saying to herself, with an irresistible appreciation of the misunderstanding, 'else she never would have committed such an egregious blunder.'

Alice Honeywood took her leave with an ardent—it sounded almost a fond—hope, responded to, in comparison, only faintly by Mary, that the acquaintance might be renewed at some future time, when the Carterets should have brought their travelling to an end, have returned to the Warren, and be revisiting Sandford.

‘There is a girl of another mind from you, Mary,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, ‘a girl who is only thankful that her lot is cast in a class in which women have neither to toil nor spin. I have a notion that her footing is not secure; very likely only so long as that brother of hers, whom she seems attached to, poor thing, refrains, on her account, from marrying. Then if she herself has not managed in the meantime to marry advantageously in the neighbourhood, which appears to furnish no society that may contain the elements of such a marriage, she will either swell the list of unwilling governesses or sink into the doleful substratum of indigent gentlewomen. I have also an idea that she is not altogether condescending to her present line of life, which she takes to so philosophically; that she has probably risen, rather than sunk, in the scale after she was privileged to get what is called a good education to fit her for any state of life.’

‘Do you think so?’ asked Mary, without much interest in the subject.

Mrs. Must came in with the dinner imme-

diately afterwards, and took it upon her solemnly to warn the ladies that the young lady who had called, was no more than the sister of the young gentleman that looked over those nasty-smelling works, as is kept close—because of their mischief, doubtless, down at the village. She (Mrs. Must) by no means meant to say that the Squire did not know what he was about when he granted a lease for these works, which poisoned the air and raised the prices of provisions, though the works did give employment to a new colony—the least that was said of it the better—in the village. But she had feared that Miss Honeywood, who gave herself as many airs as a squire's daughter at least, might impose upon the ladies; whereas she and her brother were merely the orphan nephew and niece of a wealthy brewer in the next town. And he had found that he had enough to do with his money in his own family after he had given his young relations a good education and set them up a bit in life.

‘There, I will not say I told you so,’ observed Mrs. Penfeather, when their conscientious informant had left the room. ‘I prefer to draw your attention to the fact that Mrs. Must concluded we should be deceived by the very traits which excited my suspicions, if I can call them suspicions. I don’t propose to deny that Miss Honeywood is a lady, though it should turn out she has been indebted to an uncle, a brewer, and though

her brother never had reason to expect to begin life in a better position than that of a manager of chemical works. But I fancy it is because Mrs. Must's standard and mine are essentially different that the very circumstance of Miss Honeywood's protesting a shade too much had the contrary effect to what was expected.'

Mary and Mrs. Penfeather had not done with the Honeywoods. In the evening a gentleman's card was handed in, with a request that the owner might, if it were convenient, speak with Miss Carteret for a moment, upon business.

'There, Mary, is your ambition satisfied?' said Mrs. Penfeather, before she read the name. 'You see you are actually regarded as your father's representative. Your cares are accumulating, and my office is not to be a sinecure.'

'Look who it is,' said Mary, putting the card across the table to her companion with a smile.

'Oh, he is a more modest man than his sister is a woman,' said Mrs. Penfeather, reading the 'Peter Honeywood, Gorebridge Chemical Works.' 'I have always observed that men are more modest in making social advances than women, possibly because they don't put the exaggerated value on position which women are impelled to put. He mentions business, and solicits only one moment; I should not wonder but he means business, and will not detain you beyond the time specified.'

When Mr. Honeywood was introduced, he stated quickly his object, which was that Mary might put into her father's hands a written communication regarding the lease of the works, which, in other circumstances, must have been sent to Mr. Carteret's man of business, and which the writer had feared might thus be too late to come under the Squire's personal notice. The hearers were so satisfied of the young man's sincerity, and propitiated by his personal address, that they were inclined to detain him for a little friendly intercourse. The Czar was a few years older than his sister; was little where she was tall, and florid where she was sallow. Altogether he was the better looking of the two. He had a particularly fresh, pleasant, manly face, full of ready comprehension and practical decision, with which his undersized but very well-knit and active figure suited.

He was plainer in his manners than his sister was in hers, but while he showed rusticity he was to a great extent without vulgarity. He was enough of a gentleman to be without pretension, and he had the cultivated intelligence of an education good in its kind, though it could not give the polish imparted by such a school as Ivy Lodge. His ingenuousness was the genuine quality, and not its highly artificial substitute.

He had not conversed with his companions five minutes after the business which had brought

him was disposed of, before he had mentioned his uncle Jim, the great brewer, and his own special training for the management, and in the end he hoped the proprietorship of the chemical works. 'I showed some aptitude for chemistry,' he added in the next breath, with evident satisfaction, 'when I attended Professor Beaver's classes. Well, I won the gold medal, and the Professor said—if I may be allowed to repeat such a remark—that he thought my experiments would be heard of yet.' As the speaker finished he blushed a vivid blush of pride and pleasure.

('This fine fellow is as vain as a girl, and as credulous. I don't like him much the worse for it; the vanity is so candid as well as so blundering, and the credulity so kindly,' said the astute observer; 'but he is just the man to be wound round a sister's fingers, to the permanent injury of both.')

Young Honeywood looked happy when an allusion was made to his sister. 'Alice is a jolly girl,' he said, heartily; 'a man need never mope when she is in the house; and she is a clever manager—I mean with her allowance and her dress.'

He stopped short, feeling that he might be saying too much, and not so sure of the tone of his present society, or of his falling into the tone without misadventure, as Alice had been. Perhaps such young ladies as Miss Carteret of the Warren were not accustomed to hear other young ladies styled 'jolly girls,' even when the

speaker was the admiring brother of the subject of conversation. In the same way the phrase ‘no nonsense about her’ which he had felt tempted to employ, might not be highly acceptable, but be positively offensive to ears polite. And although the Czar did not care immensely for the impression which he made on Miss Carteret and her duenna, as he mentally classed Mrs. Penfeather, he would decidedly prefer that the impression should be favourable in the eyes even of the duenna. He had an innocent craving, amounting to a necessity, to stand well in the esteem of his fellow-creatures.

He remembered at the last moment an incident which might have been made stock of in the unequal chat, and lugged it in then, rather than lose it.

‘We had a young German fellow—at least he was fresh from a German university—with a card from the Squire—from Mr. Carteret, going over the works the other day. I never heard such a number of questions put more to the point. One would have thought, indeed I had a fear of it, that he was just going into my business; and we, of all trades, like least to tell our secrets to our neighbours. We have to bind over our men, though we no longer shut them up, to keep their tongues from wagging.’

‘And why should you do so?’ said Mary, quickly; ‘is not fair competition a stimulus to trade?’

‘When it is fair,’ he answered, briskly; ‘but

who shall insure its fairness? Do you call it fair when a rascal steals into your employment for the purpose of carrying off the details of your last discovery to your rival that he may reap the fruits, for which he never spent many a weary hour and precious sovereign, or that some of your subordinates should break loose from your control and proclaim to the world the raw germ of a combination before it is either matured or rendered practical? However, this Mr. Penryn told me that his inclination was more for mechanics, but he was attempting to trace to its legitimate source the relation between chemistry and mechanics, which he compared to that of hydrostatics and hydraulics, and attempted to exemplify by the working of the telegraph. It was a piece of special pleading, hazy and German-like to boot, leading anywhere—or nowhere; still, he put ten questions, and not idle questions either, I can tell you, where I should have put one, and noted down each answer with the greatest care. Think of a fellow capable of giving himself such trouble, giving it for no definite end—for a dream;’ and Mr. Honeywood arched his brown eyebrows and pressed together his lips in a graphic note of exclamation.

‘Is there not—I cannot tell, I am only asking,’ said Mary, deprecatingly, for she took the young man at his own word, and respected his scientific acquirements—‘pure chemistry, or pure mechanics,

as well as pure mathematics, into which explorers may penetrate and find hidden treasures?’

‘If such regions existed for the behoof of Don Quixotes,’ said Mr. Honeywood, with something of his sister’s vivacity, ‘I should say they would tend to mere bedlamitism.’

‘But pure mathematics don’t lead to mental aberration; our first wranglers are not more insane than other people.’

‘Only a little more muddle-headed,’ declared Honeywood.

‘And then you must take into account,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, ‘the great safeguard to German pondering and mysticism which is to be found in habits of absolute truthfulness and faithful accuracy of observation, together with patient following of side influences to their proper results. If German students do not actually attain the goals aimed at, they do very often, whether they stop short or no, pick up pearls by the way. Don’t you remember that the shutting up of a philosopher in the old castle of Meissen, with what we now judge the foolishly unprofitable intent of forcing him to devote his whole energies to finding the philosopher’s stone, was the primary cause of the production of that Dresden china which has proved a valuable aid to the Saxon exchequer, and a source of delight to people of taste and culture to this day?’

‘How fond Mr. Honeywood seems of his

sister,' said Mary when he was gone. 'How nice it must be for a brother and sister to keep house together, and be such friends as these two are,' she added, with a grieved *arrière pensée* of her own brothers, who were lost to their sisters by the brothers' fault.

'Yes,' answered Mrs. Penfeather, 'under certain conditions, when the sister is not dependent on the brother, so that his marriage costs her a home and a maintenance. If he be induced to count the cost too heavy—well, all that can be said is that it is not good for men in general to marry their sisters any more than for them to marry their grandmothers. Not one man in a hundred can live and die a bachelor for his sister's sake without deterioration; of course all honour to the hundredth man. Women may accept the sacrifice, if it is not of their own bringing about, without receiving more injury than what may be reflected from the man's falling off. The danger to them is in the temptation to protect themselves at the expense of another; very often of two others. But what I wish you to take note of, is, that it is another development of the same quality of womanliness which recommends justly his mother to Kit Must, that bends with reason Mr. Honeywood's will to his sister's. I was speaking of the dignity and daintiness of the old woman, and here we have the blithe tongue, the ready wit, and no doubt the dexterous hands

though she pled her uselessness—of the young woman. I cannot help thinking, Mary, that whatever other qualities the exigencies of the times call forth in women, they ought to guard jealously that essential quality of womanliness.'

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE BÜRGERWIESE.

THE Carterets were off at last, fairly launched on their season of wandering. Mary sometimes called it hopefully their *Wanderschaft*, when Mr. Carteret would knock the hope on the head by reminding her that there was even less probability of the family's returning to the Warren than there had been a likelihood of the Stewarts and the Bourbons coming to their own again. And he admitted a similarity between the private and princely houses in this respect, he was persuaded that, speaking generally, the Carterets also would forget nothing and learn nothing.

The fresh plunge, when it was made, was speedily over. Very soon Mrs. Carteret ceased to animadvert on the discrepancies between foreign and home life, and Fra and Lyd to complain—a complaint with which Mary had some sympathy, though her tones were less those of conscious injury—that there was really far less difference than there was resemblance between England and the Continent.

‘Did you expect civilisation to stand still for your benefit, and French artisans or Flemish

burghers to show themselves in *bonnets rouges*, or in white hoods, for your pleasure?' demanded Mr. Carteret of his fair daughters.

Even what had aroused their attention, at first, as passing strange—had become rapidly stale and flat. A foreign tongue resounding on every side of them, with its wonderfully provoking glibness, which had mortified Fra and Lyd by reducing schoolgirl attainments to their true limit, ceased in its mere echo to ring in their ears with a half-alarming, half-vexing want of familiarity.

The sandy and marshy lands, cut up by canals, where boats instead of carts formed the mode of communication, no longer struck the travellers as odd and incongruous. They failed to be impressed, though a woman in a blue gown standing up in the stern of a boat would push off from her whitewashed red-tiled house to reach the water-girdled field where her cabbages and French beans grew, or her cow stood ready to be milked—just as she would be ferried with her prayer book or her laden baskets to church and to market on holidays and fair days.

Ruddy brown or black and white oxen yoked into harness, soberly and very deliberately pacing the fields and dragging behind them loads of clover or of wheat—even as they had trod out the corn in Eastern countries, were too late to beget a Biblical simile.

Mary, who, as Fra said, gushed, and could

not be cured of gushing, and who was the most given to illustrations, had left off leaning back, looking at the hedgeless plain with its straight poplar or lime-tree bordered roads, and thinking of Charlotte Brontë, or of her creation, Lucy Snow, speeding in her loneliness to fill a hard post in a Belgian school. Mary had given over being carried by a greater leap of the imagination, to Paul Potter and his cattle, to Philip Wouvermann and his white horse, to Rubens and his ambassador's splendour and dignity in his chateau, with David Teniers for his next neighbour. David, though he also was a seigneur, was vexed with no splendour or dignity—natural or acquired, but was prompted to paint, without the pain or the need of choice, every beer-consuming *kermess* held with gross joviality in a circuit of miles.

Blue blouses were no more conspicuous than moleskin jackets; they were far less noticeable than the smock frocks which were dying out near the Warren and throughout England. Sabots shared the fate of the blouses.

Even soldiers in dull blue or red trousers—full at the knee and contracted at the ankle—with slim bodies, twirled moustaches, and dark eyes, came to look exactly like stalwart, pipe-clayed, close-shaven, English soldiers.

In the towns there was the same passing away, at a casual glance, of novelty and individuality into

world-wide monotony. The figures of the Virgin at the street corners did not provoke Mrs. Carteret's orthodoxy. Mr. Carteret had not occasion to indicate the *gens d'armes* and commend their uniform and discipline.

Hay and straw, milk, butter, and eggs, or purple, crimson, golden and russet fruit in the markets in the principal squares were taken as matters of course; the very peasant costume which the markets showed, the turban handkerchiefs, the winged lace caps, the large straw bonnets, with ribands hanging down the backs—all palled.

The churches, in which holy water, incense, gorgeous priestly vestments, votive offerings—not to say strange worshippers, had in the early days competed so successfully with the monuments and pictures in the side chapels, that a priest seated in a confessional, his face hid by a napkin and a penitent whispering in his ear, was as engrossing, if not as imposing a spectacle as a Van Dyck or a Rubens, had lost by constant contact. They were regarded listlessly, as common, rather wearisome tasks to be got up, instead of pleasures in which there was a delightful thrill of marvelling and awe to be clutched at greedily.

The spell of the picture galleries, where each name bore a European renown, and each work had a history worthy of its merit, was gone for all the women of the party save Mary, though

Lyd was an artist herself in so far as an appreciation of form and colour went.

The *portes cochères* hid nothing. Those cool courts, with spreading vines and swelling grapes on the high walls, and gay little parterres far down as if in wells, were as any other gardens. Old houses and crumbling archways became merged into unsavoury mouldy buildings.

When the party appeared at the *table d'hôte* the same, and only the same, people presented themselves continually.

There were the two fast women, the widow and her unmarried sister, who spoke so loudly that they attracted the attention—as they coveted, of the entire table; and opposite them the clergyman and his shy young daughters, who hardly spoke above their breath.

There were the two bagmen who called for champagne, and shouted ‘garçon’; and there were the elderly widow and her spectacled daughters, who carried their noses in the air and desired to be ticketed ‘county people’—who were so frightened lest they should compromise themselves by speaking to the common herd that they confined their overtures towards conversation beyond the family circle, where it was wont to languish, to leading remarks to the head waiter.

There were the elderly men of the world, slovenly and careless in their dress and manners, who lived in foreign hotels simply because they

found living there cheaper and more palatable than elsewhere, and who, so that their end was served, were indifferent to much else, taking their ease at their inn, ready to make friends with jockey or lord, lady of shady reputation or immaculate matron, so that he or she proved good company for the moment.

Parted from the English by different nationalities were the troops of foreigners, more or less at home, who, male and female, ate steadily and in a businesslike fashion through every dish of every course, mopping their plates with their bread that no drop of sauce might be lost. Yet some of them found time for animated gesticulating conversation. To their ranks belonged the spare generals who always looked as if they had been beaten, the stout colonels who, by an inexplicable contradiction, had the air of becoming the world's conquerors, and the shabbier counts and barons. These prominent specimens of *table d'hôte* humanity were perpetually turning up in fresh development—the development the only thing that was fresh about them—till Fra said she knew their traits as intimately as she had ever known the schoolgirl features of her companions at Miss Bradshaw's school, and it was a positive relief to dine *en famille* and get rid of the mob of bores.

Then the Carterets went into Germany, and encountered sandy heaths rather than lands redeemed from marshes, and found pious inscrip-

tions in old German characters along the fronts of houses, and in modern German letters over the cabin doors of boats.

In place of church inspection the travellers were called to attend a never-ending series of concerts and operas, great and small, in public gardens or in private rooms. The rehearsals—in tuning of fiddles and sounding of bugles, could be plainly distinguished by the English visitors, as they were setting out for the Sunday morning service held for their benefit by an expatriated curate, appointed by a considerate bishop or convocation to prevent Episcopacy abroad sliding into Roman Catholicism, or latitudinarianism, or any other equally reprehensible ism.

These were the days of the infliction of waiting and refreshment rooms combined, in which were gathered together all classes and both sexes—above all, smokers—with every breath of the air of heaven excluded rigidly. The heat and oppression to all, save well-baked and seasoned Germans, with the fumes of beer and tobacco, used to try even Mary's endurance. They provoked her to lose her indulgence for some of those students in the white caps and the jackboots, with the tassel-fringed pipes, who seemed to her at once so simple and so earnest, and reminded her of young Penryn, wasting his days in the search after perpetual motion.

At last, when the youngest and fondest of change

among the Carterets was, to her surprise and discomfiture, wearied out by her taste of vagabondism—vagabondism, like any other calling deserving the name, needing a regular apprenticeship to qualify an aspirant for fully appreciating its merits—Mr. Carteret decided on settling down with his family, for a year, in a hired house in some suitable town. He was led to fix on Dresden, partly because of its ancient reputation for inexpensiveness, partly from a vague idea of his daughters profiting by its artistic advantages, and still more on account of the circumstance that when he was a young man, in the interval between his leaving Cambridge and succeeding to the Warren, he had at the same time economised his slender income and indulged his artistic propensity by passing a winter there. That had been a fairly happy winter, and Mr. Carteret recurred to it wistfully after the lapse of years, when his camp was again shifted, and he was once more going here and there, free to push on, or to call a halt, as the inclinations of his family at the moment, prompted.

This uprooted condition, which enabled them to float hither and thither, with the utmost liberty of sinking down and remaining still when and where they would, constituted a more wearing, fretting trial to poor Mr. Carteret than to his wife or to any of his children. Yet when he did bring it to an end he had a strong suspicion that every circumstance which had made his residence in Dres-

den pleasant to him in old times had either ceased to exist or undergone a complete transformation.

Just as flocks of the English and Americans who had alighted on Dresden for æsthetical purposes were fluttering angrily away before the higher prices which their own preference and the cost of a glorious and successful war had induced, Mr. Carteret took a furnished house in the Bürgerwiese—‘that Saxon Park Lane,’ as he called it with a listless jest—and established his family in it.

If even Fra and Lyd were glad to find rest for the soles of their restless feet—or, speaking more graphically, the high tapping heels of their boots—Mary, who was emphatically a home bird, rejoiced exceedingly in even a temporary home. She was pleased with the row of spacious white houses, facing grounds with green turf, shady trees and bushes, and rustic seats in common—extending between the people’s park of the *Grosse Garten* and the streets, where every second shop is an artist’s studio or displays paintings in china, from large copies of great pictures to audacious liliputian editions of the same which may be set and hung in the ears or worn on the fingers.

Besides those common grounds, each house had its own vine or hop trellis, small shrubbery, and larger garden; though, as the houses as a rule were let in separate *étages*, perhaps the house gardens were little less common than the grounds

over the way. But Mr. Carteret had hit upon a house which, when he took the first *étage*, was otherwise unoccupied.

Mary inclined kindly to the place almost from the beginning; so kindly that she half reproached herself with becoming unfaithful to the dear old Warren, which, in its chronicle of successive generations in the out-of-date furniture within the circumscribed walls, was a sort of English domestic version and pocket copy of the Elgin marbles or the Bayeux tapestry. She could not be untrue to her first love, with its manifold associations; yet she could not help prizing the German home.

It is true she had seen with a little dismay at first the draughty paved hall on which the great door opened, the wide common staircase, and the rooms opening out of each other, so that the drawing-room was entered from the dining-room and her own room from that of Fra and Lyd. And she had not been favourably impressed by the dining-room, barer than the best parlour at Sandford, literally furnished with no more than a long table and a set of chairs—a ‘feeding-room,’ as Fra called it contemptuously.

However, the salon, or *besuchzimmer*, beyond made up for it. Not that its furniture was otherwise than scanty also to English eyes; but its exceeding brightness, airiness, and cheerfulness, with its artistic contrasts, were redeeming

features. It was a large lofty room, with the creamy white walls painted in slight frescoes of fruit and flowers, executed by a few clever touches; for the Carterets were dwelling in a city of art since the era of Augustus the Strong, so that even the common staircase had rough but effective frescoes, and each landing-place was marked by the representation of a vase with flowers. The floor, in contrast to the delicate walls, was of wood stained a ripe brown and parqueted in chequers. There were soft richly coloured footcloths, mellowed by age—before the single round table with its equally deep tinted cover, behind which was the sofa of honour, for the mistress of the house and her most distinguished guest—as well as before the grand piano, the most conspicuous article of furniture in the room. The Berlin *ofen*, or white porcelain stove, was the best substitute for a glowing fire. The chairs were mostly of bent wood or wicker-work; but their covers were of elaborate embroidery, the work of busy skilled fingers, and so was the border of the velvet *portière* which hung before the door. In the windows were writing-tables and flower-stands, surrounded with trellis-work, and crowned by arches, round which ivy had been trained and cared for till it clustered in close screens and wreaths of deep glossy green, and within which stood the pot with the huge myrtle, which Fra and Lyd concluded was furnished by an equally sentimental and provident landlord in the

prospect of their marriages. The sills of the windows were broad and well cushioned, and formed resting-places far more social and luxurious than the single chairs in the little window recesses at the Warren. The great Bürgerwiese windows opened in the centre, like doors. Against the wall at each side hung mirrors, which reflected peeps of such daily comings and goings in the road beyond the gates, as neither ash nor laburnum avenue at home had witnessed in the whole course of their existence.

Mary had even a good word to say for the bedrooms, in their absolute simplicity. She did not cry out at the absence of pink and white muslin, cheval mirrors and wardrobes, engravings and knickknacks, as the other two girls protested. Here too were space, air, coolness in summer, and warmth, if it were stove warmth, in winter; and there were little bookcases hanging on the walls, *schränke* or cupboards which might contain all kinds of working materials, and bird cages, albeit empty, in each window. Even an attempt had been made, though Mary felt that it was just a shade too æsthetic and must be discouraged, to introduce and train ivy over the washhandstands.

The Carterets took possession of their house or *étage* in the Bürgerwiese in the autumn, and by the following spring Dresden had become to them like a book, the pleasant pages of which they had turned and coned over and over again. The Alt

and the Neu Markt, See Strasse, Walpurgis, and Luttichau Strassen were household words. Equally familiar landmarks were the Frauen Kirche and the Kreuz Kirche, the Hof Kirche and Sophien Kirche. The Zwinger was a morning and the Hof theater an evening haunt; to the last girls could go as they rose from dinner or coffee, in a group or singly, unmarked and unmolested, so that even a scrupulous matron like Mrs. Carteret had no occasion to interpose or enter her veto, particularly when it was impressed upon her that the operas and plays patronised in Germany are, for the most part, of a higher order than those popular in England. When a little variety was sought, there were the Green Vaults (where a roc's egg must have lain hidden), the Japanese Palace, and the different musical societies' concerts, always being held in one hall or another, in some district of the town.

Many a half-hour had Mary and her father walked to and fro on the Brühl Terrace watching the Elbe, frozen stiff and solid, affording a white highway for pedestrians, or flowing full and free, bearing on its broad bosom many a barge and smaller craft, and especially the long rafts, sinuous as serpents, guided by men with poles—the water rising and gurgling about the steersmen's feet. The progress of these rafts, which appeared in the same fashion as they had come from the depths of the forest, always floating down

and down, till at last they and their hardy steerers reached Magdeburg or Hamburg, fascinated Mary.

The father and daughter would pause on the older bridge. This was the very bridge across which an etiquette-fettered princess had long sighed in vain to walk on foot like her father's unhampered burgher subjects, till a great revolution burst over the world, scattered crowns and sceptres to the winds, turned thrones topsy-turvy, and blew up part of this very bridge, but first enabled the exceedingly human princess to attain her modest desire. Was it as sweet in the realisation as it had been in the fancy?

Walking in the ordinary mode and unnoticed over bridges was not such a rarity to Mr. Carteret and Mary, and when they stood still it was not to gloat over the fulfilment of a long-cherished and despaired-of vision, but to regard at leisure the best view of the town. By turning one's back on the copper roof of the Japanese Palace in the Neu Stadt, there was obtained in the Altstadt a group—with its objects rising one above each other, of the cupola of the Hof Kirche, and that of the Frauen Kirche, the spire of the palace, and the twin spires of Sophien Kirche. But Dresden at the best has little to offer of architectural beauty; and the gazers were more tempted to look up and down the river, the vineclad schloss or villa-decked banks of which are charming in

summer and attractive at all seasons, where the clear blue shoulder of a mountain which belongs to Saxon Switzerland closes the vista above, and the picturesque heights of Meissen end it below.

On other occasions the two companions strolled through the squares when the air above was as deliciously crisp as the snow below, where it had lent a white coating to the armour of *August den Starken* or lay in powder on the head of *Friedrich August* in their copper and bronze monuments. Mary and her father watched the country women in the homespun petticoats and dark jackets, with the bright-coloured blue, red or yellow kerchiefs tied under their broad chins, or the warm woollen hoods drawn well over their faces, as they chaffered over golden oranges and brown bread, dried fish and dried apples, cans of coffee and rows of shoes.

Closely intermingled with the traffickers and with the passing droschkies—the drivers of which looked half military and wholly picturesque in their blue riding coats with red collars, were constantly straying tame flocks of blue and white pigeons.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE FAMILY, INCLUDING FRA AND LYD, SPENT
THEIR TIME.

THE Carterets, when they took up house, knew nobody in Dresden save an aged teacher of Mr. Carteret in the days when he was a young man and studied art in Dresden.

Mr. Carteret did not think it consistent with the position of an embarrassed man seeking to retrench his expenses that he should avail himself of his privilege of being presented at Court in order to receive invitations to Court balls and concerts, a view of matters which greatly exercised the spirits of Fra and Lyd.

The family made and received visits from none save slight acquaintances until far on into the winter, when the gay season was nearly over, though Dresden had its ordinary complement of English residents,—so great as to cause a part of the town in the direction of Walpurgis Strasse to be relegated to their necessities and dubbed, in reference to them, ‘the English Quarter.’

The members of the household settled perforce

into their various grooves, to be faithfully kept or eagerly abandoned as time modified the circumstances or inclination prompted the change.

The Squire was the most to be pitied, for in forsaking his home he had left his occupation also behind him ; and though he was better furnished with resources than many of his class, while he had the firmness of mind which tends to resignation, he could not fail to feel acutely—so soon as the small excitement of continually moving on was given up—the reverse in his position, the loss of all occasion for active exertion, together with the relinquishment of influence and authority. The natural effect was the stagnation of a life in which there were as few duties as there were cares.

Mr. Carteret did what he could to render his life more honourable and less irksome. As Mary had once said of him, he was too good to rust out. But the effort was harder work than the gravest failures and heaviest disappointments of his previous life had been. It was sadly perceptible to one pair of loving eyes at least, how rapidly he aged under the inaction and the arbitrary artificial engagements which he chalked out for himself and followed up with something like sternness.

His irongrey hair seemed to whiten daily, the change on the fresh colour of his prime to the mottled and streaked purple-red of an aging man

became always more conspicuous, his bulk hung more loosely and heavily upon him, until he took to using a stick in good earnest when he walked out, while his broad shoulders grew rounder and rounder. His wife and he had been fairly matched when they married. Now the neat daintily got up little woman, whom new scenes and travels served only to brace and brighten, had been more than once mistaken, in spite of the knit between her brows and the metallic ring in her voice, for her husband's eldest daughter.

‘By a first and remote marriage,’ Fra had added condescendingly.

Mr. Carteret joined the English Club, and made himself a useful member there, especially in restraining by his presence and tone, the ebullitions of the younger and more erratic spirits. He offered himself for a churchwarden, and did what he could in support of the little alien church, though he declined to take upon himself the offices which belonged to the clergyman, or any of what were to him the small details of choir boys and disputed floral decorations. He did not refuse his services from peculiar views, but said, ‘Let the clergyman stick to his cloth, and let me stick to mine. I am only a priest to my own family; if I can be of any use, and have not to content myself with doing no mischief now-a-days, it must be as a layman to the rest of the world and to the end of the

chapter ; as for the boys and the flowers, they may be in your mother's way, they are not in mine.'

He tried to renew his acquaintance with German, and found even reading the newspapers a drudgery after an interval of many years of unfamiliarity with the language ; but he persevered in his task, and read also, along with his daughter Mary, Goethe and Schiller, Herder and Neander, every day. He visited the theatre with his daughters, every time a serious play was acted, and listened with some appreciation, even through the long political discussions of Wallenstein, which Germans of the present day hear with so much zest. He set himself to translate the first of a series of German works, bearing on morals, political economy, and ethics, which, if he were ever able to finish them, and if any publisher could be found public spirited enough to face the pecuniary risk of giving them to the world, might, Mr. Carteret imagined, benefit such of his countrymen as would read them. He painted also, taking simple subjects for his study, and working in the Gallery among a host of other professionals and amateurs—both ladies and gentlemen, some of them as stout and as grey as the Squire ; but he complained that his hand had grown stiff and his eye dim, and that any power which he had ever possessed of catching a master's meaning, had dwindled away to a fraction. He did not explain that his mind was

haunted and disturbed by the constant presence with him of a young, hopeful, almost enthusiastic man, having an honourable happy life before him, who had once stood before a similar easel and plied brush and maulstick.

Mr. Carteret had his horse and rode regularly ; he even resorted to relinquished recreations, to keep down the growing stoutness and heaviness which had now no trudges over the fields to restrain them. He tried skating again, and played rackets as well as billiards at his club. He even danced with his daughters of an evening. But whatever he did or did not do, he never fell into habits of dawdling, gossiping, slipshod idleness. He never resorted to any company, even the least worthy, as better than none, and as all the more available since the man was out of bounds and beyond the ken of old associates. He never sank to swallowing a variety and constant succession of stimulants, playing with very earth-born fire, as all the refuge that was left from dire dulness and intolerable discontent.

Mrs. Carteret was certainly better off in the common sense. Mary had sometimes asked herself, with considerable doubt, what was to become of her mother when her household, her village clubs and meetings, and her society were all dissolved like the baseless fabric of a dream. But now it seemed that the smaller mind, holding its activities more stringently and more within itself, had

carried a larger provision for energy and enjoyment along with it.

Mrs. Carteret, who had really an organising and executive faculty, had developed an absolute genius for controlling the ways and means of travel, and had relished not only the power which had been till then nascent, but the dependence of her family on her skill, and their gratitude for her success.

Established in Dresden, Mrs. Carteret was once more the centre of a household. Though it was a greatly diminished household, the fact of the diminution only enabled her to concentrate her energies in bringing about its nearest approach to perfection. And the foreign ingredient in it afforded endless provocation for reform, seeing that Mrs. Carteret was one of the many English abroad who either see no merit in the customs of the land which shelters them, or, at the utmost, none to detract from the transcendent superiority of English methods and habits.

With Mrs. Carteret, to see superiority was to strain after it, in the most adverse circumstances, with a passion that was almost pathetic.

But to have a purpose and pursue it ardently is no misfortune. Thus Mrs. Carteret's mind and time were well filled in regulating with finest nicety the little household. She strove to bring the minds of nurse and James—the English servants—into a state of reconciliation

with the situation. She laboured also to instil into the denser minds of Dorte the cook and Ursel the housemaid, who appeared in the morning in bright pink or blue aprons with bibs, and always carried the keys of office dangling by their sides, faint comprehension of English ideas of diet and tidiness.

Beyond her own family, Mrs. Carteret economised and cultivated the scraps of English society she could pick up, and above all made such excellent use of the little English church with its delicate young bachelor clergyman, that she was in all respects, to the promotion of her health of body and peace of mind, as busy a woman as she had been at home.

With regard to the last interest, she felt it so heavy an obligation on her, seeing that there were only one or two other devoted English matrons of the same mind as herself, whom she could trust, and with whom she could divide the responsibility, that she had even gone some length in pressing Mary into the service.

But, to Mary's relief, she found a mode of escape, since she had no more turn for choir boys and for the adoption or rejection of floral emblems than her father possessed, while she had a troubled conviction that if her mother caused her to take them up, Mrs. Carteret would never rest till she induced Mary to make them her sole study. She would be forced to become such an adept in

smooth round heads in keeping with smooth surplises, sober faces, fitting positions, regular attendance, consistent practice—not to say in the bringing forward or the putting back of bouquets of lilies and crosses of roses—as not Dresden, not England could match. And this would be a token which would imply that Mary, whose first duty as she had always believed was to her father, had ceased to be a daughter, and was transformed into a finical female curate.

However Fra, and Lyd with her, in a whim of the former's, stepped into the breach and improved the occasion by leading the fallible young clergyman to the verge of indiscretion and neglect of his duties—so that Mrs. Carteret laid down the law that thenceforth all Mr. Moseley's female assistants with whom she would have anything to do, must be matrons of mature years.

As it was, Mary did not find her time hang heavy on her hands, or any special paucity in her occupations and interests—though she missed her garden and the fields almost as much as her father missed them. And there was one lamentation of the mild young clergyman's with which she was far more inclined to sympathise than with his choir troubles or floral partialities and antipathies. She, too, missed her poor, her familiar friends among the poor, her father's superannuated or burdened and ailing servants, as young Mr. Moseley missed his poor of the schools, the cot-

tages, and the almshouses. Mary used to recall wistfully and sorrowfully the Lord's words, that the poor would be with men always, and to fear that the family were in an unnatural injurious condition when they could count no poor in their congregation, and when the various *Vereine* for the improvement of the hardfaring of their German neighbours were not for the Carterets at this stage of their experience. Then her father comforted her by pointing out to her, that though the primary meaning of the words was as she read it, still, even as the poor of Galilee and Judæa eighteen hundred years ago must have been totally distinct from the poor of England to-day, so doubtless the Lord intended that poverty should have a far wider signification than the mere scarcity of worldly goods—of gold and silver, food and clothing.

She had her father requiring her company in most of the pursuits which were left to him. She had her own young fresh researches into untried fields, her lively investigations into, and appreciation of, the strange social life around her. It was not from sheer dearth of employment and the impending horrors of ennui, as in the case of Fra when she consented to take more lessons in music, any more than it was from Lyd's propensity to imitation, that Mary provided herself with two new resources. She went thrice a week to a studio in See Strasse in order to learn to dabble on her own account in painting on

china, that she might be able to present a plate of her embellishment to every member of her family on his or her birthday. She received in her own room, in the house in the Bürgerwiese, a young Fräulein who was an adept in the branch of flower painting, which had a peculiar charm for Mary, and who, for a solid equivalent, was pledged to impart so much of her taste and knowledge with her lightness of touch as was transferable.

It was otherwise with Fra and Lyd. Very soon they had, as they announced confidently, 'done' Dresden from Friedrich Stadt to Anton Stadt, and from the Leipziger to the Böhmischer Bahnhof; from the statues of the Girls of Herculeum, and the most primitive pipkin in the Japanese Palace to the last work of the last German artist in the Kunstverein.

Then the girls were attacked in different degrees of severity with 'a vague disease' which had its root in listlessness and idleness, and suffered such torments of restlessness as may have been experienced by the little devils assigned to Michael Scott, when their potent master could find nothing on earth for them to do, and before they turned and preyed upon their owner as a final refuge.

The girls were so far subdued by becoming plagues to themselves as well as to their neighbours, that Fra submitted to take those music

lessons which have been spoken of. She was told in the first instance, with all the coolness of immense superiority and intimate acquaintance with the subject, that her prized power of performance, which she had acquired by means of what Fra considered most laudable energy and application as well as great original genius—was worth less than nothing. She was bidden begin all over again from the beginning, by striking single notes and running up simple scales. This was an introductory process that must last for months, while the succeeding stages—which might be attained if the pupil gave up her whole time and attention to the gentle science and worked at the normal rate of six or eight hours a day—would come in a period of years that ought to leave Fra venerable, according to her own reckoning. Nay, to heap insult on insult, this self-asserting aspiring Fra was told that her fingers—her taper white fingers, which nobody had ever dreamt before of slandering, were deformed for musical purposes, and that she must put herself under a physician's care to have the crippled members manipulated, bent, and dragged into the proper stretch and suppleness.

It need not be said that Fra retired in disgust from this austere professor, and contented herself with a master of less tremendous attainments and more lenient judgment.

Lyd instantly agreed to have further instruction

in drawing ; and, as her resolution took her more into her father's and Mary's company, and withdrew her a little from Fra's constant influence, a shade of tremulous uncertainty and of veering round to old standards, became perceptible about this time in Lyd's conduct.

But just at the critical moment a new element was introduced into the position, which ended by separating Lyd as well as Fra completely from the others, and by allying them together more closely than ever.

Through an English acquaintance the girls got an introduction to the Gräfin von Hersfeld, whose husband held a good official position, and who herself was a power in the best Dresden circles.

In addition to her other advantages, the Gräfin had travelled and was a fair English scholar ; and it was her will and pleasure to throw open her house to all English of due rank, and especially to cultivate the friendship of such English residents in Dresden as could give her the opportunity of airing her English conversation and prosecuting what she chose to consider her studies of English character.

The Graf of this well-armed Gräfin was a somewhat stolid, extremely good-natured man. He never thought of contradicting his wife, who had been an heiress as well as a beauty in her own person, unless, indeed, her projects threatened

expense, against which he was obdurate ; otherwise he made the Gräfin's English friends very welcome to his house.

Fra and Lyd exactly suited the purpose of the fanciful Gräfin ; whereas Mr. Carteret was too serious, and Mrs. Carteret too stiff, even if they could have been tempted to enter foreign society as often as the hospitably inclined Saxon countess would have had them to do. As for Mary, she was too single-hearted, too apt to be in earnest, and had too much reserve in her frankness to answer the Gräfin's end.

In addition to the intellectual gratification, the means of display and source of flattery to her vanity which Fra and Lyd supplied, the two girls were attractions in the Gräfin's drawing-room, in her carriage, and in her box at the theatre. They were new ; Fra was very pretty, while her tart wit and her vagaries, if they did not quite go down with the German notions of the docility and solidity which ought to distinguish a gracious young lady, still had the advantage of agreeably exciting and amusing an unconcerned audience.

Not that the Gräfin desired her company to remain individually unmoved by the sparkling of the English stars which she had brought within their firmament ; one of her many lively, varied, and sometimes perilous propensities was match-making.

It was true that the Carterets openly admitted themselves to be poor, and to be living abroad to retrench their expenses.

Mr. Carteret, though he did not crave pity, or practise covert boasting by dwelling on the extent of his embarrassments at home, made no secret of them.

Even Fra, who was the most ambitious in a certain sense of the family, and the most given to brandishing her rights, never hesitated to proclaim that she and her sisters were as poor as church mice. Fra's candour, with her habitual buoyancy, which had in it in these days a considerable infusion of good nature, were her best natural qualities.

But there is poverty and poverty. The Carterets, in the ignorance and innocence of their hearts, kept up a kind of style, in contrast with the simple establishments, even of members of the Court circle around them, which made a decided impression on the natives.

Doubtless these pretty high-spirited *Mees* Carterets, in spite of their father's difficulties, would still command large enough portions out of the wrecks of a great English fortune, or estate—rich in coal and iron mines, or in the ground rents of the countless groups of mills and rows of houses of some great manufacturing city, to be no mean addition to the modest income of a German officer or noble *landbesitzer*, whose land

consisted of poor ryefields and patches of unprofitable vineyards, varied by a tract of moorland or a rocky mountain.

The Gräfin was distinctly of that opinion, and clear in the determination to secure, if possible, the English originality and independence which charmed herself, as well as the English dowry which would substantially profit him, to some man of her set. Even if she were not entirely successful, there was the zest lent to life by the excitement and uncertainty of the enterprise while it lasted, and there was the entertainment provided for third parties by the contemplation of the contest.

To do the Gräfin justice, she had no intention of taking unfair advantage of her foreign guests, neither would she bear any malice if her 'light blues,' her young officials on the civil list, or her country neighbours come to spend a few weeks in town, proved too lethargic or too prudent to undertake the guidance of headstrong and volatile partners; or, if the girls, or what was more probable, their friends for them, declined the honour of the alliance.

As for Fra and Lyd, they were enchanted by the Gräfin's graceful overtures, and lent themselves readily to her designs. Foreign society had quite as much piquancy for them as they could have for foreign society. Soon the younger members of the Carteret family were as full as

they had been empty of engagements, and fulfilled their strongest hopes, through the Gräfin von Hersfeld's instrumentality. Fra and Lyd had the benefit of the close of the Dresden season. They made more of what they considered delightfully available acquaintances, among the gayest of their own country people and of Americans, as well as Germans, than they knew what to do with. The girls had invitations for every night in the week to dances and larger balls, to private theatricals, to help to form parties to the opera or to some of the many concerts.

All this gaiety, which was simple enough in some respects, appeared splendid to the unfledged girls. Many a time Fra would cry exultingly to Lyd, 'This is not like the point lace working or the practising evenings at the Warren, or the sleepy dinners at the Fullers' and the Wallises', or the choir or the Dorcas meetings, eh, Lyd?'

And Lyd would parody and out-herod Fra by railing in good set terms, in Mary's wincing ears, at that miserable old sleepy hollow, the Warren, and by fervently trusting the family would never go back to it again.

The gaiety was not confined to the evenings. There were promenades on the Brühl Terrace, or drives to the Grosse Garten, coffee parties in private houses which answered to English five o'clock teas, saunterings in the galleries, shop-pings in company, and receptions at home. At

last, Fra and Lyd were permitted to hold a court of their young companions and partners, often graciously presided over by the Gräfin—seeing that the conversation was as much in French and German as in broken English, and Mrs. Carteret's French was not at her finger-ends, while her entire unacquaintance with the German language, which she declined to take steps to remove, disqualified her from being more than a neat little automaton of a chaperon.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Carteret interfered with this sudden tide of girlish dissipation. They were both satisfied that the Von Hersfelds were respectable people of their class, and would receive none but warranted members into their community. Besides the heads of the house in the Bürgerwiese were pleased with the earliness of foreign hours, and with a kind of artlessness and homeliness which is to be found in German gaiety.

Mrs. Carteret held that it was natural Fra and Lyd should go out and mix with young people of their own age; it was their time for such pleasures; she did not desire to have her daughters with other tastes and aspirations than became their years and their station in life. After a speech of this kind she would busy herself in procuring a particular shade of riband which Fra had failed to obtain, or a flower from the Winter Garden on which Lyd had set her heart, and feel

amply repaid by a half-mocking recognition of her ability from Fra, or a careless kiss from Lyd.

Mr. Carteret had a system of non-interference with the acts of his family, whether sons or daughters, so soon as they ceased to be children, the judiciousness of which, where girls were concerned, Mary was inclined to doubt. But she could say for her father in this instance that, living much in his study, he was largely unacquainted with the dissipation of mind and frivolity of spirit to which Fra and Lyd's gadding tended. 'If papa could only hear the conversation with some of these "light blues," whose belles the Gräfin says they are,' said Mary, in elderly sister trouble. Then she began to pass in review, as far as her memory would let her, the scraps of social intercourse which came to her ears. What had the talk been about that day? Of whether Lyd was growing a double chin; and if that were the Herr Hauptman, or merely Mr. Ladbrook who rode past; and whether the new tenor justified public expectation the night before. Yesterday the conversation, when it diverged from Fra's absurd suggestion that the tea-rose which she was pulling to pieces would exactly suit the darkest lieutenant's complexion, was, if their Gräfin, who was not present on this occasion, did or did not look her best at her party the night before, and what was the meaning of Madame Dahl's coming into the room

before Madame Leypold; with a dissertation on the performance of the favourite soprano, which somebody had heard in spite of the party. The day before yesterday there must have been a question of the second tenor or the contralto to give weight to the chatter on themselves, their dress, and their doings.

There was one thing which Fra and Lyd had learned during this last month in Dresden, and that was to discourse with affected technical knowledge and high critical powers—not so much on the operas themselves, but on this tenor's bass and that soprano's high notes, as if these were the sole topics of interest, from without, on which it was worth while to bestow a moment's earnest consideration. The girls might be qualifying themselves for writing the musical critique in some fashionable journal. Mary did not doubt that Fra would undertake it, but as the elder sister held that there must be considerably better qualified aspirants, in spite of the girl's pretensions, for the post, she thought the labour of acquiring the necessary qualifications a considerable waste of time and trouble.

Yet the girls' partners in the conversation were the men who within three years' time had carried the war from the frontier into the heart of the enemy's country, and come back crowned with laurels before approving Europe; and among them were some of the women who had sent

away their heroes, and welcomed the survivors home with a passion of homage.

Mary knew that they were capable of better words, not to say better deeds. Was not this pre-eminently the land of *geist*? The Gräfin herself was intelligent and well-informed, and she had pointed out several of her circle to Mary as deserving of note—the girl with the long plaits hanging down her back, was a promising poetess; the young man with the brown beard had written—an opera naturally.

Mary liked to see the Germans' anxiety to perfect their English, which was visible in the most childish discussions. The red-faced Colonel gave manly rejoinders to Fra's supercilious comments on his experience of London. Of course he had been at the Tower, which she thought fit, and was not ashamed, to call 'a mouldy old city place.' ('The Tower where Lady Jane Grey and Sir Thomas More lay in prison! Oh, Fra,' groaned Mary; 'and as if her life in London had been spent in Grosvenor or Apsley House or in Park Lane—at the very humblest computation, and not in a suburban school, when a day at the Tower was not only part of the educational routine, but a bright day in the girls' calendar; but that was when she was more unsophisticated and nearer reverence.') Now it was Fra's cue to say with a sneer, 'And I suppose you went to Madame Tussaud's also;' to which the stout-hearted German answered, 'Yes, I

did go there once, also,' amidst the suppressed smiles of the rest, who knew nothing at all either of the Tower or Madame Tussaud's, but put them down in the same obsolete, despicable category.

It was a sensible relief one day when somebody came in with the news that Cambridge had beaten Oxford again in the boat-race, though it led to nothing further than a wager between two of the gentlemen to ride their horses against each other for a bet in the Grosse Garten in the afternoon.

What Mary feared for the whole party was that they would soon become too selfish and silly even for their own endurance. 'I do wish papa would come in and speak sense, or at least cause us to speak a little less nonsense.'

But before that desirable consummation the Gräfin Von Hersfeld's festivities were crowned by a party, at which the King and Queen were present, and that nearly carried Mary herself off her steady feet. 'Your sisters are as snobbish as a couple of tuft hunters who have never been in the company of a title, native or foreign,' complained Mr. Carteret to Mary, when he had suffered with patience a good deal of family expatiation on the illustrious personages who had put the finishing touches to the Gräfin's assembly. 'The real gilding which rank gives at home is not always satisfactory, but having seen that, at their

leisure, I have to object to my daughters being dazzled by foreign pinchbeck.'

'But surely a king is somebody,' said Mary, taking guilt to herself, 'even to people of such consequence that they have already enjoyed the distinction of dancing with a duke at a Lord-Lieutenant's ball.' Mary alluded to a piece of promotion which had once befallen herself. 'We are not in company with a king every evening, not to say a gallant king, who has led his soldiers to fight, and earned, next to Kaiser Wilhelm, the title of defender of his country.'

'The humblest member of the *land-gewehr* earned as much,' asserted Mr. Carteret: 'I am not sure that some of the naturalised Germans—such as young Penryn, who fought faithfully for an adopted country which was not likely to give him great credit—did not deserve the praise the most of all. I do not know that you women were all fain to make a hero of him when you had the chance.'

'But we never had the chance,' said Mary, merrily. 'You forget that a man in pursuit of so tremendous a farce as perpetual motion could not stop for our applauding smiles.' Even while she spoke her own words called up before her a vision of a banner 'with a strange device' before the nobleness of which the glory of kings failed.

Mr. Carteret could not read her thoughts; he exclaimed, 'Mary, I don't like to hear you jest

on a craze which may be the wreck of a capable fellow.'

Mary turned the conversation a little. 'And I saw on a royal neck the diamond necklace which on ordinary occasions is doubly locked and guarded in the Green Vaults.'

'Well, at least that was something solid,' said her father.

Mary was aware that her father, in his British father's exemption from all respect for the foreign titles which he had stigmatised as pinchbeck, was guilty of some illiberality and injustice. She herself had heard at least one title, at this very Gräfin's ball, which had as true a historic ring, and answered to hereditary possessions as extensive and important, as those of any representative of the ruling families of England.

CHAPTER XI.

WHOM MARY MEETS SCOUTING THE VERONESES AND
STUDYING THE ALBRECHT DÜRERS.

MARY was bound for the Gallery for her simple gratification. She had not much to do with art except in a true love for it; any power of expressing herself by form or colour had not been given as in the case of Lyd, and painters do not spring fully armed into birth, as aloes have been supposed to bloom, once in a hundred years. Even her close companionship with her father had not made Mary sketch and work at landscapes, which was not wonderful since, in these later years at the Warren, during the interval when Mary grew up from a child to a woman, the squire had found too much to do to practise an old accomplishment which was after all a mere accomplishment, more correct and careful than brilliant, and not very inspiring to lookers-on.

But Mary felt all the more disengaged and impartial to admire, because even at Dresden she only tried to copy a flower and paint a China plate, while she had not put pencil or brush to

paper at home for any purpose less practical and nearer art than to depict a tumble-down gate—not because it was picturesque, but as a note where and how it needed mending, or to give an idea of a window—and this had been a somewhat grand flight—which she had seen in another part of the country, and that might be a guide to the village builder who was raising the last cottage her father erected on the Warren.

It was a sunshiny morning in March, cold still, but with the snow clouds fled for the season, and with strong indications of that sudden change which converts winter into summer by a touch—‘the touch of fairy hand’ on the banks of the Elbe. Already the proprietors of all the humble little beer gardens—which, as they were near at hand, competed successfully with the Grosse Garten on the outskirts of the town—were looking complacently on their budding cherry and pear trees. The owners were directing the repairing of the benches and the fresh hanging of the lamps in anticipation of the fast approaching time when the never-ceasing concerts would change their quarters from the stifling atmosphere of societies’ rooms to the air freer, though still polluted with much tobacco smoke, under the broad blue vault which stretched from the Elbe to the Rhine, and to many a neighbouring river of which the Fatherland took less cognisance.

There was a little company of holiday people

walking just before Mary, bound for a family gathering, or for some pleasure excursion to the Waldschlösschen, or to Pillnitz, or the Moritzburg. The men and women belonged to a higher class than that which has all its festivals on Sunday, yet the women practised the pretty coquettish tradeswomen's custom of using fans instead of parasols, while the sun was still a March sun. A large black or brown fan held before the eyes which just peep over it, or beam from beneath it, is so manifestly an effective addition to a spring toilette, that Mary was not surprised the habit should ascend in the social scale, until the Gräfin von Hersfeld and her set, with Fra and Lyd, adopted it on occasions.

The first brush of green had touched all the bushes and trees of all the alleys as far as the Zwinger, to which Mary went leisurely, making a detour by the smallest of lakes, on which the tiniest of shallops did duty for sailing boats. On the benches in the court, where they were surrounded and overshadowed by elaborate allegorical figures sculptured on entrances and façades, of Raphael and Michael Angelo, St. George and Siegfried, the earliest batch of nurses were to be met, seated at their ease, to knit, gossip and lend an eye to the small mummies of swaddled babies, bound to pillows upon their laps. The babies were hardly freer in limbs and lungs when deposited in perambulators with a minute feather

bed tucked up to the chin, above each recumbent infant. In the latter case, as if to add a refinement to cruelty, though no doubt with the humane purpose of shielding the child from that air of Heaven, which worthy stove-baked Germans have such an inveterate shrinking from, the hood of the equipage is reversed and the half-smothered freight driven, with what may be called, for the sake of graphicness, its back to the horses.

However, these Saxon babies—round, blonde, and blue eyed, take kindly, and prosper wonderfully under the strange processes to which they are subjected; and the spectacle they present is anything save depressing. Some of the older and poorer women wore the dark kerchief wound round the head turban fashion, which is so curiously unbecoming to the German face, while it positively sets off clear-cut French profiles. Among the younger and well-to-do women—*bonnes* in good families, there were Altenburg peasants in their ‘tracht’ or costume of short full skirts, voluminous aprons almost meeting behind, dark bodices, and black silk coronets with a back piece on which a little flower of coloured silks or beads is embroidered, having black streamers hanging down their backs. The *mädchen* were not what could be called handsome in a stranger’s eyes. But there was something better than beauty in their broad blithe faces as they discussed the old mother’s cough—why Jette

was seeking a place—or that Franz or Karl was coming to the town in the next detachment of working soldiers, who in their labourers' dress, with only military stripes on the arms, were constantly to be seen as they marched to and from the scene of their operations.

Whether it were the influence of the spring making itself felt, or her own humour for the moment affecting her mind, it seemed to Mary that she encountered none save cheerful images this morning, or else there was some power abroad which cast a veil of resignation and a halo of hope about everything that was sad. For Mary did pass a funeral, but it was a Lutheran and not a Catholic funeral, and that distinction, all who have dwelt for even a short time in Germany can appreciate. From the silver instead of the gold of the open car, and the profuse flower-wreaths hiding the coffin, to the serene, well nigh glad inscriptions on the vehicle itself, of quiet rest and happy home-going, every item pointed to the original abolition of purgatory from the Lutheran Creed, and to what followed, at the time, of triumphant faith in the complete work of God's Son and entire trust in His pardoning mercy. Before the little procession, the nurse who had done the last mournful services for the deceased walked, without wearing the mourning which was reserved for the bereaved family, and conversed sedately, on her own business, with the chief undertaker's man mar-

shalling the procession, and bearing as his insignia a green bough, which might stand for a palm branch.

Mary not only crossed the path of a funeral, she overtook a mild-faced deaconess in her black gown and blue apron and having her black hood bound with purple over her white cap. But the association with pain and sickness that the quaint figure conveyed was so blent with the sense of balm and relief which she and her sisters of the Mother-house, her Catholic sisters of the Order of Mercy and her lay sisters of the Order of Albert, brought to all suffering within their reach, in Dresden, that Mary felt no more depressed in her cheerfulness by contact with the deaconess, than she would have been depressed by contact with an angel.

It might be that the funeral and the deaconess sobered Mary's gaiety a little, as they lent it a quality of tenderness which it would otherwise have lacked; but she would not, with the full knowledge that death and tribulation were in the world, have desired to miss the encounters for any shadow of thoughtfulness they cost her.

Mary had been to the Gallery many times—certainly weekly, if not daily—since the family had settled in Dresden.

It seemed an age ago since she had first climbed those broad stairs, relinquished her umbrella to the woman in charge, and entered excited, reverential, yet unable to rest till she had

passed the less treasures by, and penetrated to the chamber of chambers, where hung one of the pictures of the world, fitly kept alone in its perfect majesty and beauty—Raphael's *Madonna di San Sisto*. There was the meek and modest virgin, the simple peasant girl standing with her bare brown feet on the white clouds, holding cradled in her arms the Child, with its child-likeness and its divine wisdom. The grand adoring old saint in his robe of fine yellow and white, lined with cherry colour, knelt on one side; on the other knelt beautiful St. Barbara in a cool lilac and green drapery. Mary liked this figure the least in the picture, and it seemed to her, if she might dare to express the thought, almost simpering in expression and affected in attitude. But the two boy angels below, with their brown and green bird-like wings, and their chubby faces full of awe and delight as they gazed into the unseen, were simply perfect; while the faint circle of angels' heads, in the blue of the sky, which formed a semi-circle round the group, answered to a vague requirement and expectation in the minds of the gazers.

Mary had looked again and again, but never looked her fill at this picture. Then she had broken up the rest of the Gallery into fragments and seen them, in turn, with some comfort as well as much pleasure. She had a respectful and very happy familiarity with many of the chief possessions, and entered in a degree into the speech

of each of them, with a width of perception and enjoyment which she had inherited from her father.

She could walk without hesitation to one after another of her favourites, and dwell admiringly and intelligently on their merits, whether they were those of Murillo's artless 'Madonna' with the dark eyes lit up, or his 'Saint Rodiguez' with the mortal wound, holding the palm and receiving the crown of martyrdom, or an old woman planting a pink in a flower pot, by Mieris, or an old poulterer offering a young woman a cock for sale, by Metsu.

There was one thing which Mary had not been able to stand, and that was to visit the Gallery in company with her mother and sisters.

Mrs. Carteret, without *malice prepense*, far less with the design of insulting her countrymen, calmly compared the pictures to those of the Academy.

Fra besought Mary not to 'gush,' and decoyed Lyd, whose sense of form and colour ought to have been an interpreter to her, to rush from room to room, and peck at this picture and at that. The girls devoted their principal attention to the contemplation of the company—not the artists who were at work, they were the modern schools of the old masters, and a legitimate and interesting study in themselves—but the company *par excellence*, the sheerly idle, and for the most part vacant frequenters of the place, who were there because it was the thing

to do at Dresden, just as they might have gone to a bull fight at Seville, and perhaps with rather more satisfaction. To complete their offences, Fra and Lyd, after railing in good set terms at the intolerable behaviour of some ladies who let their private conversation be heard all over one of the great rooms, would go far to outdo them in bringing their petty personal discussions into competition with the silent speech of the immortals.

But to-day Mary was guilty of her sisters' roaming propensities in public places, only it was roaming with a difference. She had a fanciful desire to take in the whole at once, and compare and contrast the pictures thus matched. So after standing for a few moments before Ribera's 'Mary in Egypt' kneeling with her rippled golden hair descending to her feet, by her own open grave, Mary Carteret walked on rapidly to Velasquez's portraits. She paused opposite that of a pale-faced man with fair hair grown grey—before she went from it to Rembrandt's portrait, roystering and rollicking with his wife on his knee, and his glass in his hand. She advanced at the next stage to his 'Manoah and Wife,' rich and beautiful, and his quaint 'Marriage of Samson.'

She changed to Rubens, and studied briefly the painter's powerfully painted boy sons and the likenesses of himself and his wife as robust and buxom cooks, among their fruit, vegetables, and

game. She passed to his 'St. Jerome,' with his sleeping lion—a very king of beasts in slumber.

She tried Van Dyck's so-called children of Charles I., pretty and prim as children, and his 'Charles and Henrietta Maria.'

She took a great leap to Tintoret's mysterious 'Fall of the Rebel Angels,' and Veronese's splendid 'Marriage at Cana.'

She rested herself on Titian's superb, stately 'Girl with a Fan,' and 'Girl with a Vase.'

She was able to bask for an instant in the ineffably pure, delicate, dazzling fairness which shone from 'Virgin and Child' in Correggio's 'La Notte.' The light refined while it withdrew the mind from the finical elegance that was too apt to attend on Correggio's 'Virgins,' and it had been so entrancing to the multitude in all generations, that they had exalted the picture above the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo.

She spared notice for that Virgin of Sassoferato's regarding the sleeping Child. It was being fitly and fairly copied by a girl artist. The original was very sweet, but it was still more open to the reproach of affectation and mannerism.

Then, ere Mary turned into the room which was consecrated to Holbein's 'Meier Madonna,' before that unlucky discovery which proved it to be merely a replica of the picture at Darmstadt, she felt that she had reached the end of her tether. She must give up, as utterly futile, the idea of

taking in, by a succession of quick earnest glances, the grand many-sided whole of what man can do in art. She must leave untouched gem upon gem, with Il Francia's 'Virgin and Child holding a Bird,' and the Giorgione where Jacob encountered Rachel, on which it had always seemed to Mary that the dew of a fresher morning than ours, rested. As for the rooms full of smaller pictures, she could only recall the 'Tribute Money,' the 'Magdalene Reading,' and Palma's 'Three Daughters' holding the prominent places. Even with regard to them she felt abashed at the folly of her undertaking. It would have required powers as rare as those of the painters, to compass, ever so slightly, these wonderful pictures and their beauties, in one morning. She must relinquish whole suites of remaining rooms very welcome to her when she sought them singly, and which were full of Wouvermann's gallant groups at fords and inn doors, of Ruysdael's coolness, Berghem's mellowness and Claude's sunshine. She could not so much as stop to think of the homely solemnity of her bright-tinted Bassani, in which the denizens of poultry and farmyards were always naïvely conspicuous in the most sacred scenes. She had to omit entirely her two Teniers, sometimes absolutely pathetic in the very plainness of the father's and the son's speaking. The gorgeous game, flower and fruit of her Weenixes and Mignons were left nowhere. She was reduced to contenting herself with tar-

rying for the rest of her stay in the Meier 'Madonna' room, where stout Hans' most notable work was in the good company of John Van Eyck's and Mabuse's 'Madonnas,' and in the still better company of two Albrecht Dürers. Of the last, the one from the great 'Passion' was crowded with small figures, having a jewel-like radiance, and something like the flash of steel upon them, and the other, a solitary 'Christ on the Cross,' had the figure raised against a deep blue sky, while the whole conception was instinct with noble anguish and awful loneliness.

The room had a single occupant—a man standing motionless before the last Albrecht Dürer. He was disturbed and looked round on Mary's entrance. To her surprise, she recognised young Penryn, the heir of her father's reluctant gratitude, the desperate seeker who desired to solve the insoluble problem of perpetual motion, a man whom the world would regard as a good deal madder and more unjustifiable in his madness—though Mary could not endorse the last conclusion—than a certain mad Graf who had lately risen above her horizon, and of whom she was destined to hear, till her ears rang with the very monotony of the measure.

Mr. Penryn showed a puzzled recollection of Mary's face as one he had seen before, by covertly looking at her more than once, before he bowed slightly, but with an assured air, indicating that

he had hit the mark of her identity. At the same time he moved aside to leave her free to make her examination of the Albrecht Dürers.

He seemed inclined to make the slight bow suffice for his acknowledgment of their acquaintance. Mary thoroughly roused, conscious of the interest which her father would take in the meeting, did not well know how she was to put in a claim to a more definite renewal of intercourse. She was hesitating whether she should not walk up to Taff Penryn and take the initiative in addressing him, upon the plea—he was the first person whom she had met, since she had come abroad, that she had seen before at the Warren, and who knew something, however little, of her English home. This would only have been half the truth; for, although it was a fact that Mary's heart would have warmed at an encounter with an old Turfshire neighbour even in the tenth or twentieth degree, in this kingdom of vine slopes and pine forests, of comparatively modern battlefields, of endless quartets and fugues, and of one glorious picture gallery, it was by no means the English yearning which caused her heart to beat high at the renewed sight of the flaxen hair and brown face. It was the excitement of meeting again one of the wonders of the world—a modern alchemist of mysterious potency, attired in a modern coat, breeches, and hat, instead of an ancient furred gown and cap—and who

was yet as ready as his hoary brethren of the middle ages to cast the world behind him and count it well lost, for the fascination of grasping at a shadow whose substance had eluded the greedy clutch of the most devoted and erudite aspirant in every generation up to the present moment.

Before Mary could make up her mind, Taff Penryn took the matter into his own hands. It had occurred to him, simultaneously with the idea that it was just possible a little bow was too poor an acknowledgment for favours received, that he could confer a favour in his turn. The young lady, one of Mr. Carteret of the Warren's daughters, might be at a loss in a foreign gallery, and be the better for counsel and information.

He turned back and came up to Mary as frankly and simply as he had just greeted her formally, 'Are you living in Dresden, Miss Carteret? Have you been long here? You are without a catalogue. Do you know the pictures? Can I be of use to you?'

The foreign intonation which Mary had formerly remarked in his English seemed to have dropped from it, and it came to her with a pleasant native accent, after even the accomplished Gräfin von Hersfeld's very allowable but somewhat trying blunders in speaking of being 'prepared' to receive her dear friends, or in enquiring whether Mary had ever been presented to the 'Lord Major' of London.

All the same Taff Penryn was a German on German ground, a man who had all the confidence and the inspiring ease of being at home in the subject and the scene. Mary answered his questions without seeking to be concise. All the family, including her father and mother, were there, and had been there for the last six months : they had become householders—if an *étage* could be called a house—in Dresden. She did not have a catalogue because she had the better part of hers off by heart. She could not presume to say to one who had spent his life in Germany, and who, in studying at Leipsic—had doubtless often come to Dresden, that she knew the pictures ; though she could say they had been an occupation and delight to her during her stay. He would see that she did not like to trespass on his kindness and accept his services under false pretences of utter ignorance or helplessness, but she would be greatly indebted for any information he chose to give her.

In spite of the encouragement deliberately afforded—for Mary was anxious to make herself agreeable to Taff Penryn—he was not quick to offer his services when he understood that they were not needed.

He asked for Mr. Carteret instead, and said something civil of calling for him, only his—Taff Penryn's—time, as a rule, was not his own and was much occupied.

Something in the manner and not in the words left Mary with an impression that Taff Penryn and her father had parted awkwardly.

Mr. Carteret, taken by surprise, and in the height of consternation, had probably expressed to the young man in whom he was concerned, without any clear call to control him, as bluntly as he had done in his own family afterwards, his sense of the unprofitableness, the utter folly and therefore the positive culpability, of the student's most cherished pursuits. And no doubt Taff Penryn, who was quite as candid and resolute in his own way, had stuck to his point and denied the right of interference, however well meant, in his career.

It looked for a moment as if the interview must end there, but an opportune observation which Mary ventured upon the Albrecht Dürers caused Taff Penryn to say with some animation and interest—

‘Do you admire Albrecht Dürer? I thought girls did not care for him. I thought they would prefer such great showy pieces as those of the man milliner Veronese, out there,’ indicating with an impatient jerk of his elbow the door leading to the Italian room.

It felt refreshing to Mary to be referred to as a girl, in this brotherly, off-hand, slightly disparaging, yet wholly kindly fashion, by the young philosopher, in the same manner that he would address his comrades' sisters, and the old pro-

fessor's daughters with whom he had lived all his life.

But she experienced a shade of mortification at his inference. 'I dare say many girls care for Albrecht Dürer,' she said smiling, 'at least I hope they do, else it is the worse for the girls ; and as for Veronese,' added Mary, brave in her little pique, 'I think he too is very worthy of admiration as a grand painter with his tools, if he did not think deeply or feel acutely. Yet they say he was tender-hearted and devout-minded, for all the lavish pride of life in his details.'

He answered the first part of her sentence : 'I see you are on Ruskin's track ;' and then he admitted fairly, 'Very likely it is all right, but I don't go in for pictures or for musical performances unless for the soul that is in them—I mean the soul of the design—the truth to be told and the lesson to be taught. I am too ignorant and obtuse also, I suppose, in this line, to care for the technicalities and to have pleasure in feats of execution. I know I like these well enough in my own shop, that is in mechanics and chemistry ; I can hum and pur like a cat over inventions and experiments which have come to nothing, simply because of the ingenuity and dexterity displayed in them. I don't think I half deprecate the waste of skill and of ten or twenty years of a man's life given to those timepieces stored in the Green Vaults,

which were warranted to lead out processions and marshal historic scenes, as well as do their ordinary duty of showing the hour. The break-age of one small wheel or chain in the machinery was their permanent destruction, since no man could or would trace out the intricate processes on which they worked—always saving their inventor, who might be in his grave, worn out by hard mechanical study long years before the disaster.’

‘Then you have sympathy with the Chinese?’ said Mary.

‘I should say that I have some sympathy with the Chinese, who invented the art of printing and the manufacture of glass,’ he granted quickly, pulling his blonde moustache; ‘but you are referring to their toys, and I was alluding to a weakness on my part. Do you miss anything in Raphael’s pictures?’

‘In Raphael, in the “San Sisto”?’ said Mary, breathlessly.

‘Yes, most of all in the “San Sisto.” It is hypercriticism, of course; but does it not strike you that he has attained to the very height of his standard, so that, noble as that standard was, there must have been something limited in it, which rendered it capable of his attainment.’

‘And yet you believe that the discovery of perpetual motion is within man’s reach.’ Mary did not speak out this reflection, she only thought it and of the glaring inconsistency, while she

looked at the daring critic with bright enquiring eyes.

‘There is something in such perfection as Raphael’s which sometimes frets me with a sense of a lower aim, as well as of a cold material superiority. My senses are ravished with the perfection but my spirit is not satisfied,’ he persisted. ‘Now, in some of the older masters and in the Nuremburgher the struggle between inspiration and obstacles is so passionate and pathetic that it thrills a man only to contemplate it. It is as if the soul of the painter was bigger than his canvas, than his paints, than his fingers, than the whole outer world; and the longer one looks at the picture, what of soul has really entered into the work, breaks through more and more, as if it would never have done with breaking through, and appeals to a fellow soul and to its cravings. Do you know what this says to me?’ he broke off, pointing to Albrecht Dürer’s realisation of Calvary.

‘No,’ replied Mary in a single word.

‘It says, in the sublimity of that desertion and sorrow there was a grain in common with the human smallness of abandonment and isolation experienced by those inventors and discoverers who strove, suffered, and agonised in their own poor way to benefit a world which stigmatised its best workers as fools and fanatics.’

Mary was silent; such words were strange to her, accustomed to reticence on all subjects which

moved men deeply, above all on religious subjects, in young men especially ; though she also knew that the time had gone by when young Englishmen were tempted to express hostility to religion. On the contrary, it had become the fashion to patronise and pat it on the back as a very good thing in its way, while they dropped it, in the very act of patting it, as no concern of theirs, and a little beneath their attention.

She could not tell whether this young man were specially religious ; she could only guess that he felt strongly on this as on other subjects, and that where he felt strongly he had no shame of speaking openly—nay, he had picked up a habit in a retired primitive life of giving impulsive utterance to his thoughts. He did not now show any consciousness of having said too much, or for that matter consciousness of any kind.

The effect upon Mary, after her experience in listening to the unvaried, hackneyed chit-chat—bald in its very smartness, of the Gräfin von Hersfeld's set, was as if the young woman had been suddenly transplanted from a garden dwindling into barrenness, by reason of want of air and no change of the exhausted soil, to a free hill-side open to every wandering wind of earth or heaven, and where each stray breeze was welcome for its very freshness.

But Mary and Taff Penryn had so far exhausted their discussion—it was too one-sided for

argument—and he was prepared, as a tribute to a certain amount of friendliness which had sprung up between them, on the moment, to escort her on her return through the rooms and out into the grounds. There she was edified and amused by the pleasure with which her companion stopped to regard the fountains playing for the first time that season, to buy a bunch of violets from the girl selling them near the door-step, and to exchange a sonorous ‘Guten Tag’ with the old woman who greeted him as a former purchaser of her photographs.

Taff Penryn went with Mary past the Queen Dowager’s palace and the wall beginning to be covered with frescoes in greys and browns of the whole race of Saxon princes. He detained her to point out with German indefatigableness the general scope of each separate example of the series, and he displayed, in spite of his assertion of indifference to technicalities in art, considerable satisfaction with the correctness of historical costume in the illustrations. His last evidence of goodwill to Mary was in his calling her attention in high glee to a plebeian, bedraggled, unceremonious mother pigeon which, after dipping, sidling and bending obsequiously to those hewers of wood and drawers of water in the Neumarkt, who were accustomed to throw it and its brood small doles of crumbs, had ended by perching phlegmatically on the symbol of the anointed head of Friedrich August in the statue before the Hotel de Saxe.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BARONESS GISELA AND HER COUSIN THE MAD
GRAF.

VERY soon Fra and Lyd's devotion to the charms of foreign society, which consisted, so far as they were concerned, in the favour with which the two girls were received, became largely concentrated on one young lady. She was a visitor, not of the Gräfin's but of a quiet and sober elderly lady, a Madame Marck, who was not even noble—at least who had done the best she could to forfeit the nobility to which she was born by marrying in her day a wealthy Berlin banker of merely burgher origin.

Madame Marck, with the considerable income which as a childless widow she had inherited from her former husband, was a convenient friend of the Gräfin, and still more so of Madame's own niece, the Baroness Gisela, the motherless, only daughter of Baron Rudener, one of the poorest of honest thrifty old country noblemen, whom rich and sumptuous plebeianism could afford to deride.

Madame Marck, in her partial descent to trading ranks, had so sensitive an appreciation of what she had left behind—while she had forgotten the substantial gain accruing to her by the exchange, that she was, in spite of her parsimonious disposition, quite willing to pay in a sort for the Gräfin's faithful friendship. She contributed fully to all the incidental expenses which the members of the best society do not refuse to share in country excursions and friendly festivities, by volunteering to furnish the refreshments, to bestow the *trink geld* on the attendants, to take upon her the debt to choral singers, and to lavish upon the Gräfin the flowers the rearing of which was Madame Marck's special attainment and recreation.

Being in such a subdued frame of mind on her own account, Madame Marck put an exaggerated value on the social importance of her brother's daughter. She considered it a privilege and not a burden to be of use to her, by receiving her with all honour as well as kindness when the Baroness Gisela came in from her father's half-ruinous *schloss* in a remote district of the Thuringer Wald, to profit as she best might by the progress in civilisation and the urbanities of a town, and to have her share in the stir, which was life after the winter stillness that the Gräfin von Hersfeld and even Madame Marck called death, of the castle buried in the wilderness of woods.

The Baroness Gisela did not trespass on her aunt's prepossession in her favour. Mary had an agreeable surprise in this last object of Fra and Lyd's furor. The young Baroness was a quiet, shy, proud girl. Her father's poverty, her elder and favourite brother's death in the late wars, were crosses which she could not readily forget. In addition, the Baroness Gisela suffered from a supreme humiliation to a young woman. She might have been pretty, or at least very pleasing, with her slight pliant figure, her masses of dark brown hair, not worn in the luxuriant plaits of her peasant countrywomen, but suffered to hang down about her face and neck in long loose curls, her delicate youthful colour, though her nose was broader than Mary's and more tip-tilted than Lyd's—but for one fatal defect. The Baroness Gisela had been born with so bad a squint in both her large brown eyes, which had not been operated on by science, that it was an actual distress—to those who were not so familiar with the defect as to lose sight of it—to meet the gaze which was thus distorted.

Taking everything into consideration, her father's age and impecuniosity and the restrictions and deprivations which that condition alone implied, her darling brother Hugo's premature and violent death, though it was a glorious death, her own personal disfigurement, it was difficult for the Baroness to realise such a life of light-hearted freedom from care, indulgence from friends, and

flattering petting from society as that enjoyed by her young English acquaintances, the Carterets.

The girls lived in different worlds, and Gisela could only regard that of Fra and Lyd Carteret with wistful fascinated wonder, in which there was no sting of envy; for Gisela's was not a rebellious or exacting, rather a submissive and contented nature, moreover she possessed her compensations.

At first it was a mystery to Mary what could be the attraction to her younger sisters in the quiet old-fashioned little Baroness, of whom the magnate the Gräfin von Hersfeld spoke only with condescending pity. 'Poor little Gisela, for whom we must do the best in our power, though I cannot hope that even so middling a fate as that of her doting *tante* Julie is in store for her. Baron Rudener has no influence, any more than a portion, to bestow on his daughter's husband. His ancestors were not provident enough to become members of a *stift*. What commoner, be he simple wood merchant, head forester, physician, or pastor, the only representatives of the middle class to be found in the forest, will be likely to look over these unfortunate eyes, even if Gisela's father and brother were willing to consent to the degradation? No; either Madame Marek must adopt her—to the cutting out of her other nieces and nephews—or the smallest post at one of the small courts, with some little grant from a

foundation for poor noble young ladies, which will keep the child from starving, is all that can be expected for Gisela.'

Mary cogitated whether the secret of the extravagant fancy which Fra and Lyd displayed for the Baroness Gisela, lay in propinquity, since Madame Marek and her modest household were established on a neighbouring *étage* in the Bürguwiese. But such propinquity went for little in a town so small as Dresden, and with girls of such energetic and independent habits as Fra and Lyd Carteret displayed. Then could it be that handle to Gisela's old German name—even as Mr. Carteret had accused his daughters of being unduly influenced by trappings of rank which were rendered paltry by their shabbiness? But the girls knew other Gräfinnen and Baroninnen, old, middle-aged, and young, some of them in far better circumstances than those in which Gisela von Rudener was placed. Yet on none did Fra and Lyd set their hearts, as they set them on the young lady — insignificant, somewhat neglected (in spite of Madame Marek's zealous efforts), and whose supply of pocket-money was so absurdly scanty that it provoked to laughter behind her back the very girls who were sedulously cultivating her acquaintance above board, and whose own father was living abroad to retrench his expenses.

Mary had begun to question whether Fra and Lyd had not done themselves greater injustice by

their ostentatious professions of worldliness than she had ventured to suspect, when all at once a light of illumination flashed on her. Baroness Gisela, if she was poor as a church mouse in everything else, was rich in one possession—she owned a tie of blood, not very near, but still sufficient to receive capricious acknowledgment from its object—to the individual who was then creating the liveliest sensation in certain circles in Dresden.

Baroness Gisela had a cousin a Graf, as well as a father and a surviving brother Barons. But there was this great distinction between the relations, that while Baron Rudener and his son were fallen down in the world, obscure for their rank, poor and plodding country noblemen, the young Graf von Felsberg, who had already entered on his kingdom, owned a proud national name which his ancestors had once and again carried to the front in history, and had succeeded to immense tracts of country and great wealth for a German nobleman. Withal he bore such distinction in his own proper person as to cast into the shade even these inherited gains, since he was popularly designated, both by patricians and plebeians, by the alluring style—not simply of the Graf von Felsberg, but of ‘The Mad Graf.’

Mary had seen him first at the party at the Gräfin Von Hersfeld’s which included the King and Queen among its guests. Then there had been an interesting difficulty whether the Mad

Graf could be brought into the royal circle, not because of any defect in his coat of arms or revenues, or any suspicion of present outrage on his part—in keeping with his classification, but because he had just emerged from a year's imprisonment inflicted on him as a punishment for his last duel.

The Graf's face showed those traces of a barbarous custom which Fra had missed in Taff Penryn's. The Graf had not gone through his university career without half-a-dozen of such warlike encounters as those which had left a long livid scar down his cheek, and another scar across his right hand.

‘What a brutal wretch!’ Mary had been tempted to exclaim.

‘Oh no, my dear young lady,’ an enthusiastic bystander had explained; ‘a little ungovernable in his temper—a fault that prevented him from serving with the honour which he was sure to have won in the late glorious war; he could not brook discipline, brandished his sword in a superior officer's face, and had to retire immediately by favour—a fault for which he had to eat the onion—an expression of your divine countryman, Shakespeare's, is it not? He is very generous; not a *Kellner* at the hotel where the Graf is staying would not cheerfully have his dishes thrown at his head every day, for the *douceur* which would be certain to follow. The Graf presented an intriguing Russian Princess, who has been staying in

the same hotel, with an elegant phaeton and pair of beautiful ponies, just to make up to her, for the disappointment of his not complying with her scheme of marrying him. You may see him in his sables driving it for her sometimes, when he is not guiding his own four-in-hand, or when he is not on foot in the shabbiest *joppe* to be met with on the pavement, bound for the stables, where he will groom his horses with his own hands. And don't you think his scars become him—set off the—what shall I call it—fiery nobility of his air?'

Mary looked again. 'They are not out of keeping,' she admitted, 'with the *tout ensemble* of a man who must be a descendant of the Robber Knights, and who appears to be half desperado, half Turk. I wish the Russian Princess well through her conquest; at least, she had the chance in her favour of being accustomed to the taming of Tartars.'

'But there was no conquest in the matter,' insisted the speaker, 'unless on the Graf's side. If you think that he presented the phaeton and ponies out of subjection or fear, you entirely mistake the man. Why, I have seen him throw a whole thaler into the dirt to be picked up by a poor drudge of a woman, thankful to fill the post of a scavenger, or scatter coin broadcast for *honigkuchen* and little windmills, which he left to the children gaping round the poorest stalls in the Alt Markt at Christmas. Yet I have heard the same man threaten to horsewhip a head ostler or

a farrier, or the clerk who sold the tickets for the theatre or the railway, if he fancied he was overcharged by a single groschen.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said Mary. 'But still it is arbitrary, one-sided generosity, with justice as arbitrary and tolerably rough. I cannot help being confirmed in my idea that there is an affinity between the Graf von Felsberg and the Russian Princess, whose lace is soiled, while her coachman is resplendent in purple and gold, and which ought to bring the pair together.' Mary's exponent of the Graf's shining qualities had to give her up as incorrigible.

Mary's second look at the Graf had shown her a tall, lean young man with a deep broad chest, but with the tendency to high shoulders, whether or not it might be the effect of the shape of his dress coat, which Fra had affected to discover in Taff Penryn. Nature had constituted him beardless and whiskerless, in itself a conspicuous exception among his hirsute associates.

He had done the best he could to remedy the deficiency by wearing his fair hair—not so fair as Taff Penryn's, but still yellow hair—not merely long, but tossed about and thrown back in what was not so much a fine frenzy, or a Schiller fashion, as a precaution against what was effeminate in his smooth brick-red cheeks and aquiline features. But there was a still better remedy for any womanliness of aspect than the studied disorder of his

hair, or even the scars with which he had contrived to invest himself, there was a hawkish wildness in his bright blue eyes, which was not an attribute of a woman's face.

His evening dress was simple, and unlike his bedecked neighbours, without the riband, cross, or star of an order. It was not without traces of eccentricity otherwise. He wore magnificent diamond studs and solitaires, but he had neither wedding, betrothal, signet, nor any other ring on his sinewy embrowned hands; and the little silver watch which he drew by a hair guard from his breast pocket was what might have been a cheap gift to a schoolboy.

The Graf's face and figure were conspicuous enough to be easily recognised, even though his fame had not been sounding in every mouth, so that Mary noticed him frequently afterwards. He was at the theatre in the box next to the stage, applauding in his loud voice, and occasionally throwing flowers, with which he would come well supplied. People said there were valuable jewels in the hearts of some of these bouquets, but this Mary could not vouch for. He was reining up his four fine horses with a flourish at the door of his hotel. He was sitting in a clumsy chair, drinking Bavarian beer, at the window of the most ordinary beershop. Generally he was alone; the man's humour seemed unsocial.

Mary would only have given him a passing

thought, had not her attention been specially called to him by the sensation which she found the Graf was creating in the world around her. She was made to see that there is a kind of notoriety which is not only infinitely delightful to its object, but has a pungent fascination for commonplace and thoughtless people. It is a spurious fame, which somehow dazzles and captivates much more than real fame impresses the ordinary bystander. It may be that it proceeds from a distorted reflection of really great and rare qualities, manly indifference to the world's opinions, superiority to mere conventionalities, originality and independence. Perhaps the turned aside, twisted shadow looms out more imposingly—as it is certainly far more fantastic—than any straight simple reality, otherwise it is odd that the effect, which is far from legitimate, should have ten times the influence of the substance.

Mary, who was neither commonplace nor thoughtless, could not account for the excitement of which the Mad Graf was the author. It encompassed him like a constantly rising magnifying mist. She asked herself in vain what it was all about, and what it came to. Felsberg was of high and notable lineage, and his possessions were extensive; but surely these were not unheard-of accompaniments. And the world was no better—rather the worse—for the Mad Graf's swaggering and stalking here and there,

driving ungovernable horses; crossing the Elbe when the ice was crashing under foot; walking over from the hotel roof to the roof of an adjoining house where a friend lodged, as an easy and unpremeditated way of paying that friend a visit; entering into a scuffle with a sentinel who was only doing his duty; and dissipating his money as if it were diamond dust.

She could comprehend that the man's diseased vanity might render him an engrossing hero to himself, but how he could be a hero to every third sane person, even to such foolish young girls as Fra and Lyd, was passing strange to Mary. Yet here was the Gräfin von Hersfeld moving heaven and earth to get the hero to be present at her gatherings; announcing with sparkling eyes to her other guests the treasure she had secured; approaching him with all her blandishments and the most respectful homage, which he received carelessly, or repulsed with absolute rudeness.

Here were the Graf von Hersfeld, and other staid and sober-minded men, discussing their brother Count's impertinences and follies, not only with the keenest zest, but with the utmost earnestness, as if they were 'the affairs of the State.' Here were two artisans pausing and laying down their tools in the public streets, that the one might point out to the other *den tollen Grafen*, and here were Dorte and Ursel gaping over their knitting at their post at the gate, from which not

all Mrs. Carteret's English sense of propriety could avail to dislodge them—together, for the chance of seeing the wonderful nobleman pass by.

In the case of Baroness Gisela, familiarity with her remarkable kinsman might have bred contempt, but the reverse was the truth. Of all the votaries who worshipped at the shrine of the Mad Graf, none was so entranced and devoted as his cousin. Not only was her imagination caught and fired by every circumstance of power, wealth, striking person, individual daring and recklessness, in which the young man differed from Gisela herself, but by a thousand subtle touches of German feeling and romance, which could not come within the sphere of Mary Carteret. In addition, the Mad Graf was fitfully kind and lavish in his favours to his relations; and Gisela had not so many friends that she should not prize the condescension of this, the most distinguished of their number. He would drive up with a tremendous dash, filling the establishment with proud ferment, to the door of the house in which Madame Marck's *étage* was to be found. After waiting, with little more patience than the animals which pawed the road, till the little cousin, summarily summoned, hurried out in her shabby walking dress and mounted—with fear and trembling, for Gisela was not physically brave any more than she was physically strong—to the seat next the noble driver, where he sat with

strong wrists well turned out, eyes fixed straight before him, and not much conversation, he would carry her off to be part of the show which he desired to make in the Grosse Garten.

It may be supposed that the excursion was as much of a pain as a pleasure to poor Gisela, who, among other antagonistic sensations, hated to know herself conspicuous, and sincerely desired to avoid being stared at. Yet she would never fail to exclaim to Madame Marck on such occasions, almost with tears in her eyes : ‘ What a good heart Fritz has. He likes to have all his appointments perfect, and you know whether or not I am any ornament to his drag.’

At another time, when he might have driven her in quieter style, or walked out with her, the Graf forgot his cousin entirely, and did not come near her for weeks. He would make her quite costly presents of such flacons and opera glasses as were not to be seen in Dresden out of the Green Vaults, but he would not see that the poor child’s fur-lined mantle was moth-eaten, her hat of last year’s gone-out fashion, her very gloves mended and re-mended. Madame Marck, though she was both proud and fond of her niece, either misinterpreted the Baroness Gisela’s social dignity and immunities—until she regarded it as of little consequence what a young Baroness wore, or reserved her means for greater diplomatic services in Gisela’s behalf, or indulged, in spite of

her regard for her noble kindred, in the stinginess that, except on special occasions, was one of the aunt's attributes. Probably it was a mixture of all the three influences which left Gisela so shabby under her well-provided-for aunt's chaperonage.

Gisela would sing, to all who cared to listen, her cousin Fritz's praises, in which she included his raw-head-and-bloody-bone escapades of duelling, his uncalled-for hairbreadth ventures, and audacious supercilious contempt for authority and custom—deeds which in another would have made her own blood run cold, or her cheeks burn, but which in Fritz were so many feathers in his cap and jewels in his crown.

She would expatiate on his different castles and seats with their valuable antiques, choice modern French or Viennese furniture and works of art, as if upholstery and articles of vertu were the joys of Gisela's heart; whereas she was a girl of simple tastes, absolutely unacquainted with art, save in the great art galleries of Germany, to which no doubt the Graf von Felsberg's galleries could not approach, though Gisela was tempted to believe they did.

She would boast of his retainers, his dependants, his sway for good or evil over hundreds and hundreds of his countrymen, as if Gisela herself were the most ambitious, while she was really, in her proper person, and apart from her family pride, one of the humblest of maidens. It was all the

glamour of the divergence—wide as the poles between them, and of that picturesque, yet stagey, more or less deliberate madness of the Graf's for which he was perfectly accountable, that had such a hold over his own erratic fancy and over the fancies of more rational people—people who required something pronounced to tickle their fancies, and who relished the operation when it was performed.

At last Mary Carteret was able to lay hold of the cord that drew Fra and Lyd without fail to Baroness Gisela, and which caused them to be for ever calling for her, beseeching her to walk with them, and to join their coffee *kränzchen*. (The last was an institution in copy of the real thing, and with regard to which a select set of young English and foreign girls combined, were solemnly sworn to repair—when they were not better engaged, to each other's houses, for coffee and chatter on successive afternoons.) Fra and Lyd overwhelmed the young Baroness with patterns of work and copies of music; they even volunteered to dress her hair for her; and they were particularly punctual in calling for her to carry her with them to their common parties.

Gisela, who certainly received in general quarters a little transferred lustre from her fortunate relationship, which served to make her poor little baroness-ship go down the more glibly with the court circle and the gaily inclined wealthy

English and Americans in Dresden, enjoyed, however, no such reflected radiance in the eyes of other hero worshippers, as was poured back upon her by Fra and Lyd Carteret. Gisela encountered no such enthusiastic listeners, who were well nigh rabidly inclined to follow her example as she met in the young English girls.

The enthusiastic stories of the Graf's boundless wealth and regardless conduct were the last straws which broke Fra and Lyd's mental backs. They were cast entirely off their balance. They were interested and fascinated almost beyond their control.

They spoke, dreamt, and thought of nothing but the Mad Graf. They rushed from end to end of Dresden in the most distant prospect of seeing him. They were as inordinately gratified, and filled as full of wild conceit, by a bow or a word from him, when he came near them indoors or out, in company with the cousin whom they courted flagrantly for his sake, as if the great gaunt and grey Kaiser of all the Germans had stooped from his throne to speak to them, or some ineffably and learned wise professor, like Fra's first teacher of music, had vouchsafed to commend their playing and drawing.

While Mr. and Mrs. Carteret, only half conscious of the mischief, looked on passively, Mary did not know how it was to end. Her consolation was that the Mad Graf, in that superb madness of

his, really took very little notice of the girls, and did not encourage their thralldom. It was therefore to be hoped that a flame which had so little fuel to feed upon, would consume itself only the more rapidly for its fierceness, and would leap out one fine day in cold ashes.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHOM MARY WATCHES AT A SMOKING CONCERT.

MR. CARTERET was, as Mary had supposed, keenly interested by learning that Taff Penryn was in Dresden. After waiting some days in anticipation of the promised call which was not paid, he began to question his daughter closely with regard to each particular of her interview, including the details of the young man's appearance and manner.

The Squire groaned audibly when he heard that Penryn's dress, though perfectly respectable, was inclined to be threadbare, while he had alluded in conversation with Mary to his mission as a discoverer. 'He'll come to grief,' prophesied Mr. Carteret, 'and he might have done well. What distant relations he has in Germany are unlike the Penryns in England—worthy, well esteemed people. He has followed up his education commendably. He has abilities and attainments which ought to give him a competency, if not distinction among his fellows. As an assistant to a professor, since he has not taken to the Church,

to law, or to physic, and has not qualified himself for a Government office, he might be in a perfectly independent, honourable position.'

Mary did not say, 'How could you expect a searcher into the grand Arcana to descend to teach the rudiments to little boys with satchels on their backs, or even to impart philosophy to flighty, singing, shouting youths, in white caps and long boots, with rapiers, and tasselled pipes?' She knew her father would think that she was treating the question too lightly, that he could not bear a joke on this point. She only said, 'But must there not always be some speculators—shall we call them? No, dreamers is the better word—in this very wideawake, practical world? Would it not be considerably the worse for the want of dreamers? Has it not been once and again decidedly the better for them? You do not mean that the old world, which Charles Kingsley called "faithful and fruitful and young," is grown too old for dreams? Oh, do not say so, papa. And surely there are always compensations for the dreamers.'

'But this is wild dreaming, which has no more relation to justifiable visions than the sheepest gambling has to lawful trade; and what compensation can there be for a broken heart, a lost reason, and starvation?'

'You put it very strongly,' said Mary, wistfully.

‘I cannot put it too strongly,’ said her father. ‘I wonder if there has been a strain of craze in these Penryns from the beginning; if their race to ruin; if that fellow’s withholding my Aunt Sophia from putting the Warren past me, and bestowing it on him, were only earlier instances of it? But this youngster’s dementia is gaining upon him. It must have taken fast hold on him when he referred to it to a casual acquaintance—a girl like you, in a public place.’

‘You are not more complimentary to girls than he was,’ complained Mary; ‘and I don’t think the worse of him for letting out a bit of his mind. Do you hold that a clear proof of insanity, sir?’

There was one enviable peculiarity of foreign society as exemplified in Dresden which had already struck Mary. It was shown in a certain freedom and breadth of contrast which has not existed in England for more than a century.

It meant more than that a man could do abroad what he was not permitted to do at home, even though there were Englishmen expatriated along with himself, standing looking on at every street corner, and under every wayside tree. In addition, what would have been inconvenient and undesirable at home, lost all its inconvenience and undesirability abroad; in the liberty thus provided there was opportunity granted for an ampler and far more diversified experience.

Mary, or any young woman, 'gentle or simple,' beneath the rank of a princess, could traverse the streets of Dresden, walk on the Brühl Terrace or in the Grosse Garten unattended, and escape observation. She could even enter the theatre and take her seat next the old lady with her knitting, or the party of schoolgirls, as she might have entered a church at home, alone and unsupported, without incurring the smallest annoyance or a shade of censure. Nay, more; she could quit a court assembly, if she had the privilege of attending court, and join a few special friends who from love of music, or simply from a taste for variety, had agreed to occupy a table at one of the people's concerts held in some society's rooms or in the public gardens.

It did not matter—it probably added zest to the entertainment—that the next table was surrounded by shopkeepers with their wives and children, by nurserymaids with their charges, by private soldiers, or by peasant visitors to the town. Where sobriety prevailed, as a rule, no contact was feared.

But Mary held that liberty had reached its height when ladies not only did not decline, but, on the plea of the excellence of the music, coveted a share in the 'smoking concerts,' which were a winter speciality of Dresden.

She was a little incredulous at first of the propriety of this stretch of privilege, though she

was not one of those unfortunate women whom smoke extinguishes. She had on occasions done what her mother had in her very honeymoon refused to do—borne the Squire company in the smoking-room at the Warren, without considering that her garments were in consequence irreparably defiled.

But Mary required some amount of evidence to convince her that there was no harm in going with a party, the members of which she knew, to a smoking concert. She was not satisfied with the Gräfin von Hersfeld's inviting Fra and Lyd to accompany her in an expedition which might be half a frolic. It was only when Mary heard of clergymen and quiet-going people—English as well as German, who took their womankind freely to grace those promiscuous gatherings, that she was reconciled to accompanying her sisters, Baroness Gisela, Madame Marck, and some gentlemen of Madame's acquaintance, to a smoking concert.

The scene was a large hall, furnished with numerous small tables, round which sat family parties or groups of friends. The men—many of them in the light or dark blue uniform, both of officers and privates—were smoking and drinking beer. Some of the drinkers were said occasionally to empty fourteen glasses without disturbing the performer's phlegm. The women were mostly in walking costume. When there were exceptions

these presented themselves in the usual dark silk or woollen gowns, lace frills, white gloves, and fans, with which Mary was familiar, as the stereotyped dress at German concerts. The wearers were knitting, drinking coffee or chocolate, and nibbling cake or biscuits.

The atmosphere was a blue haze, and pungent in its properties, so as to cause Mary's eyes to smart till they grew accustomed to the medium. She was more reminded of the old affliction, the railway waiting-room, than of garden concerts; but the orchestra relieved the resemblance.

The music consisted largely of pieces for violins and violoncellos, with an infusion of flutes, trumpets, and drums. As it took place in Germany, it was good, as a matter of course; though, to Mary's mind, it was also loud for the near neighbourhood of the audience.

The conductor was a sight to see: his very bushy hair quivered with excitement. One of the performers was a small boy. There was a young girl among them. She was slight, very pale-faced, with fair hair thrown back. She wore a black silk gown, and carried a great bouquet when it was not her turn to play. She was said to be a Russian, making her first appearance with the violoncello—a huge instrument in the thin arms that embraced it, and wielded the bow with taste and skill. As a pendant to her was a buxom young woman in pink tarlatane,

with pink roses in her hair, who sang with many a roulade in a clear strong voice, though she was likewise said to be a *débutante*.

The evening was exceptional ; it was the anniversary of an old Saxon triumph, which late events recalled to the public memory with a powerful appeal.

On this account the performers and the audience alike came down from their high pedestal of musical learning, and deigned, to Mary's satisfaction, to indulge themselves and their neighbours in national melodies and ballads, delivered with enthusiasm and received with loud and long hand-clappings, and with involuntary, irresistible, by no means unmusical choruses.

Thus Mary heard not merely 'Die Wacht am Rhein' and 'Hurrah, Germania,' but their still more impassioned predecessors which woke the land in a former generation, 'Lützow's Wilde Jagd' and the 'Schwertlied.' She had also thundered with effusion in her ears 'Was ist die Deutchers Vaterland?' and the companion question, 'Wer ist der Deutcher?' By a natural process the singers went back, and celebrated Gutenberg and Schwarz, with their names and fame entwined in one song ; then the company got as far off as the great Frederic Barbarossa—to be seen for all time, where he sits in his ivory chair at his marble table, with his beard, of the fire's glow, grown through the table on which his chin rests.

Being hardly able to extend their recognition of German heroes and heroism to a remoter distance, the performers passed, by a sudden transition, into the homely, domestic, and tender, and sang with applause quite as pronounced and significant, how there drew 'drei Burschen wohl über den Rhein'; and

Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf den Heiden,

until Mary expected the whole house to break into the nursery doggerel of 'Mein lieber Augustin.' But Mary had not listened without distraction through the evening; she had been moved by the entrance of Taff Penryn. He came in alone, sat down at one of the unoccupied tables, and began to drink beer and smoke, all by himself. He did not look either prosperous or well. His coat, even among so many work-a-day coats, was manifestly shabby, whilst there was nothing of ostentatious eccentricity and studied carelessness in his outward appearance, such as the Mad Graf might sport in his handsome dress. On the contrary, poor brain-struck Taff Penryn's toilette, among other rough toilettes, looked as if he had put it in order, however mechanically, to come into company. His short flaxen hair lay smoothly above his broad brown forehead, his necktie was neatly tied, his cuffs were pulled down; if his hands were hacked and stained with mechanics' chemi-

cals, it was either an overlook or because the tokens were ineradicable for the moment. He even wore a narcissus in his button-hole. But Mary judged that the decent threadbareness about the young man was rendered more perceptible by his fagged, almost dazed look.

He had come out for a diversion from some task which he had been unable to leave altogether behind him. His eyes had the far-away, intent expression which Mary had never been able to forget since she first saw it. It was the introverted shining of eyes which are gazing inwardly, not outwardly, which, in fact, hardly take cognisance of the objects around them. His air was weary and languid; he poured out his glass of beer and left it undrunk; he puffed at his pipe by snatches, and with an effort.

Mary could not think what he came there for, or how he could derive any enjoyment from his share of the entertainment. The entrance fee was passing cheap, certainly; still, if he would not or could not bring his hand or his mind to any more remunerative calling than following the clue to perpetual motion, he might miss so much as twenty groschen from his purse.

But as the evening drew on, by the time the people's songs came to be sung, Taff Penryn, who remained unconscious of Mary's presence, and, for that matter, would not have been influenced by it though he had noticed

it, looked first soothed, then cheered, at last inspired.

The outward light came into his blue eyes until they flashed, colour rose in his brown cheek, until from being sallow it grew ruddy; he clapped his hands vigorously at the 'Deutchers Vaterland' and the song about Gutenberg and Schwarz.

He looked round and hailed comrades—both soldiers and civilians, one or two of whom came quickly at his greeting to his table, and he clinked his glass jovially with them. His head was bent the farthest forward, his tongue was evidently wagging, when tongues could wag, with the best there.

He had friends among the performers, when, in the intervals between the parts, these exalted personages came down easily from their elevation, lighted cigars (so far as the men were concerned), received congratulations and exchanged opinions on terms of perfect equality with the audience, in a manner which was more admirable than familiar to Mary. The conductor and the bass fiddle, who would have been welcome anywhere, pushed their way to Taff Penryn's table, and straightway fraternised with him and his companions. They were all chaffing each other, it seemed to Mary, poking fun at each other, and elaborating their simple German jokes in their honest German fashion. Especially they were chaffing Taff Penryn, with utter oblivion of his half-foreign nationality, and

he was keeping his ground and giving as good as he got with the perfect good humour of a man who is sure of himself and of his footing among his fellows.

Shakspeare has made his Dane say, 'They are all mad in England.' Might it be that they were all mad in Germany, or were there such redeeming qualities in Taff Penryn's wits that his associates could afford to overlook what was unhinged in them?

Of course, like all madmen, his mania was limited to one subject, and it was plain to-night that he could be withdrawn from it. Was not that a hopeful sign of his madness proving ultimately curable, or at least capable of being arrested and kept within its original bounds?

Although the bonds and fetters of an artificial state of society, 'unto which he was not born,' might cause him to raise his back, metaphorically speaking, against its claim—although morning calls and late dinners were an offence to him—it was clear that where such recreation as he cared for came in his way—indeed, he had gone out of his way to seek this, having an instinct probably that it did him good in his forlornness—he took it cheerfully and thankfully, and profited by it in a high degree.

He was no morose, unsocial madman in his moonstruck theories, even where the business of the evening was concerned. Mary was sensible that after the songs had dispersed his preoccupa-

tion, they stirred him. She had seen how the love of his adopted country had swelled in him when patriotism was the order of the evening. She fancied, a little later, as he drummed with his fingers a little restlessly on the table, bent his head and turned it aside, it was to hide the moisture which gathered in his eyes ; for was he not as much dedicated to self-denial and self-devotion as a vowed monk, only without credit or reward? And he was listening to the last Bursche in the song of the ‘Drei Burschen,’ declaring what the Wirthins Töchterlein—the little maid who lay stiff and still on her bier—had been and was, and would be through all eternity, to him, and to the exquisite summing-up of the typical—

Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf den Heiden.

A little incident occurred which struck Mary particularly, and impressed her more than anything else with the perception that this poor young man, in the course of being lost to the world and himself, was a ‘kindly man among his kind.’ A little child at one of the other tables had strayed from its natural protectors without being observed, and had wandered through the room until it came to Taff Penryn’s side. By that time the waif was aware of having lost its small self—a consciousness, the horror of which was only deadened

by the condition of cross sleepiness into which the victim was rapidly passing.

Taff Penryn caught up the intruder, stayed the lamentations on its lips, seated the bundle without any hesitation on his knee, fed the infant on biscuits, as if he had been an old nurse or a fatherly elder brother, or a young father in his own person, until he succeeded in drowning the baby cares in sound peaceful slumber. Afterwards the young man remained contentedly standing the fire of comment and jest, which did not in that company proceed the length of ridicule, with the burden on his knee—hoisting it up again as often as it slipped down, till the heads so like each other in colour came once more into close contact—or softly tapping its cheek to see that it was all right, till its careless proprietor reclaimed it from him.

It was not much of an incident in such an audience. The only remark which Mary heard it call forth, was that made by Madame Marck, who, in indicating the group, designated Taff Penryn by a term which, so far as the writer knows, exists only in German, and seems to have been made for such a philosopher as the investigator of perpetual motion. ‘Do you see what that young man with the broad forehead has got in his arms, instead of one of the *Spitze* or *Stecke* which run ordinarily at our students’ heels and are apt to intrude into the concerts? He must

be a *Kindernarr*' (a fool where children are concerned).

'Oh!' said Fra, 'I know him: that is a sort of *protégé* of papa's, who had him once at the Warren.'

'Fra,' interposed Mary indignantly, 'How can you say so? Papa has no *protégés*; he would not like your use of the term, least of all in the present instance.'

'It is the proper term, for all that,' said Fra indifferently, 'though papa has not been able to make anything of this man. He is half English, madame, but I am sorry to say he is *närrisch* all over. Look another way, Lyd. He would not be an agreeable person to be entangled with; if it were only to bow to here—I do not mean literally here in the concert room, which is Liberty Hall, and where I should really have wished to be introduced to the conductor, in order to ask why he gave that morsel of Reinecke's in such a peculiar time, and at what shop I can get it to buy.'

For days afterwards Mary's gown smelt of the smoking concert, and the prosaic odour never came across her senses without a vision of the 'Kindernarr,' and his misdirected genius, bringing with it a pensive echo of Mr. Carteret's words, 'What compensation can there be for a broken heart, a lost reason, and starvation?'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MOTLEY INGREDIENTS OF A PLEASURE PARTY.

MARY had got still more accustomed to life on an *étage*, to *Semmeln* or *Hörnchen* in place of rolls or a loaf of bread as the staff of life, and to *Rehbraten* as a *pièce de résistance* at the dinner table. She had grown used to every shopman or woman whose goods she bought, dismissing her with a friendly *Adé*. She was familiar with the fact that every fifth or sixth male passer-by in the streets on a Sunday formed an example of the curious combination of a spectacled nose and a soldier's uniform. She had ceased to be taken aback by the sight of the girl knitting industriously while she sold her bouquets at the flower stall, of the matron making up her accounts at the window, and of the gardener pruning his bushes, on the way to the English church.

It was summer already in Dresden, so far as the balmy air went ; the song of birds was heard in the gardens, and was answered by the joyous response of the people hurrying to resume open-air recreations and innumerable excursions in steam-

boats, in omnibuses, and in open drosckies—yet the month was only April. True, the cherry and pear trees, which make not only gardens but whole hill sides white with blossom, near the town by the Elbe, were hanging out their white flags, which established a long truce with ice-cold winds, while they were in flagrant opposition to the snow-shroud that had quite lately, within six short weeks, indeed, melted from the earth. The forest trees, not evergreen, were doffing their brown with marvellous celerity, and the lilac in the Japanese palace was budding and breaking out into fragrant dusky purple or pinkish lavender plumes. The long processions of rafts on the muddy water were not merely an occasional, but were fast becoming an incessant spectacle, as the woodmen hastened to bring down the planks of felled trees, their winter's work, to the highway that was only open to them when the sun shone high and warm in the sky. On the banks of the river the vines were lifting light green shoots and tendrils to grasp the regiments of bare poles, and lend verdure to what was otherwise bleak and skeleton like. The King and Queen, whose punctual going and coming formed almost as good a sign of the calendar as the flight of the swallows, would only let another moon rise and set in its four quarters before they quitted their winter palace in the centre of their capital and people, and repaired by a morning's sail to their summer

retreat at Pilnitz, or to some slightly more remote *schloss*, or princely resort among the German watering places.

It was strange to feel this sudden, yet rather sweet than brilliant advent of summer—and that not in a land where roses bloom at Christmas and orange trees never cease to scent the air, but in a region associated with snow and ice, with winter nights that begin at three o'clock in the afternoon, and need all the pretty pageantry of Christmas trees to lighten them, and by a river which has a half savage character like the Elbe.

Mr. Carteret, who had tutored himself into something like submission to his narrow lot while the winter lasted, was seized with such an intolerable fit of restlessness, and sick recalling of spring activities—of the breaking up of fallow ground and the smell of newly turned mould, and of runs with the hounds, that he felt there was no resource but a temporary change of scene to carry off the fit of spleen. An excuse was afforded him in the fortnight's closing of the Gallery for its yearly cleaning, which robbed him of the semblance of an occupation beyond the limits of his own study.

He would go with his family into Saxon Switzerland quite at hand, but as different from See Strasse or Prager Strasse, as Loch Goyle from the Salt Market or the Gallowgate of Glasgow. His wife and daughters had not yet seen the Bastei or the Kulstal, the Winterberg or

the Prebischthor, and he himself had not revisited the great pine woods and fantastic rocks since his bachelor days at Dresden. The season was very early still, but a devoted countryman like Mr. Carteret knew well the exquisite fleeting charm of the fresh spring days, which no later and fuller growth can recall; and the party would escape the crowd of summer and autumn tourists from which they had suffered sufficiently the previous year.

Mrs. Carteret was propitious: she brightened up at the idea—not so much of the scenery, though she admired that in a calm way which indulged largely in comparisons, but of well-conned time-tables, well-conceived arrangements—not a meal out of time, not a rush to boat or train, not a field glass lacking, not a great white umbrella left behind, and wraps never in the way yet always to be found when wanted. The climax was reached with the sound of Mr. Carteret's pleased testimony, 'My dear, you never forget anything;' Mary's half-despairing exclamation, 'Mamma, how do you manage it all? and you will never let me be your substitute that I may learn;' Fra's call for some luxury unheard of in the circumstances, which yet was there to answer to the call; and Lyd's sigh of refreshment and satisfaction.

Mary's alacrity was quite equal to that of her mother, though it had a different source.

Fra and Lyd were rather indifferent at first. A family excursion had become quite flat to them; but the Dresden season was dying by gasps, and the Gräfin von Hersfeld was already gone for an anticipatory week to herald the Hersfelds' subsequent removal to their place in the country for the summer. The grand parting and dispersion were being broken by degrees to society; and in the meantime Fra and Lyd would lose the less from their own brief withdrawal. But they stipulated for a provision against the dire dullness of having nobody to look at or speak to save mamma and papa, and Polly, by getting Baroness Gisela invited to join the party.

Mary was glad that her sisters had entertained this thought, though she herself made no advance in her acquaintance with the half-shy, half-proud young girl. 'Because Fra and Lyd make a sort of bogie of me,' said Mary to herself a little indignantly, 'they descant on my superiority of age and airs of wisdom, which I cannot help sporting when they will be foolish, and render themselves ridiculous. They force me to be stuck up and disagreeable. I dare say the time will soon come when no young person will look at me, and when I shall be as much turned over to the elderly people as if I were a governess or duenna.'

However, there was no mistaking the unaffected pleasure which the receipt of the invita-

tion, approved of as it was by Madame Marek, gave to the little Baroness.

All was going well for the expedition, when Mr. Carteret came in one day, and told Mary that he had met young Penryn in the street, had got his address, had gone with him to his pension, which had proved a very tolerable pension, and had ended by bidding him come over and go with them on their excursion, 'which he was induced to consent to,' ended Mr. Carteret. 'I thought it better than to propose having him to dine here, when I saw him ready to fly off on that hint. I cannot reconcile it to my conscience to be done with the young fellow; after all, he will injure nobody save himself, and, what is better, he seems bent on being indebted to nobody. He has been acting as aide to the royal librarian, and I suppose has been earning money in that way for his freaks. I must go and tell your mother. I trust it will not put her out.'

'No,' said Mary, 'she is always hospitably inclined, and she is a courageous woman. I imagine he will not be in anybody's way,' she added more doubtfully. She was thinking of Fra and Lyd and Baroness Gisela—of what would be the former's disgust with their father's selection of a strange element in the family party, on the one hand—and on the other of Taff Penryn's invulnerability to girls' attractions.

But the sensation excited by Taff Penryn's

being caught and pressed into the company was faint indeed where Mary was concerned, compared to the whirlwind of excitement raised in Fra and Lyd, when they came racing in with the information that Baroness Gisela had announced to them she had been telling her cousin, the Graf Von Felsberg, of their intended sail, and he had said he should not care to hire a boat for himself, and come up with them somewhere in the course of their journey.

Baroness Gisela followed hard on the steps of her messengers, herself so breathlessly elated as to be almost scared by the greatness of the tidings. It was as if the King had given out that he should sail in their wake and take them in. No flourish of trumpets which announced the arrival of Prince George, the bluff heir apparent, would have had a tithe of the effect produced.

It did not seem to strike any of the younger girls interested that the Mad Graf was taking an unwarrantable liberty in thus tacking himself on, as an out of doors, off and on, so to speak, member of a party, when he had not been so much as introduced to its chief.

Mr. Carteret thought it would be as well for the sake of the Baroness Gisela, to wave his sense of the impertinence. 'I fancy the fellow is so spoilt that he believes he can do anything. I conclude I had better leave my card and permission for him to come with us in the orthodox fashion.

'We are not to suffer a chase and be the spectacle and the talk of the day to all the idle onlookers from the Briühl terrace,' said Mr. Carteret.

But the Graf, though he was perfectly polite, as became a Graf, in receiving Mr. Carteret's overtures, was as difficult to deal with as ever. He could not decide on his movements beforehand. He should really prefer to take them in; perhaps he might not turn up after all.

On receiving this communication Fra and Lyd began, between themselves and the Baroness Gisela, to lament bitterly that papa had interfered and done mischief, so that such a delightful promise and so great a triumph over their associates might come to nothing. The Graf hated to be meddled with, or counselled, or to have it so much as suggested to him to do as his neighbours did, when he was always prompted to be as unlike the rest of the world as possible. That was the very thing—together with his birth, possessions and personal attributes, which made him so charming.

'Never mind, *meine Freundinnen*,' said Baroness Gisela, 'I think Fritz will come after all; he has nothing else to do that I know of. He is waiting to drive his four-in-hand in the *Corso-Fuhrten*, but till then I am persuaded he has not a single engagement he cares to keep.'

Fra and Lyd submitted meekly to take this crumb of comfort, though from any other quarter

and in respect to any other person, they would have scouted an admission so little flattering to their powers of subjugation.

‘The plot thickens,’ said Mary to her father. ‘We are to carry off Mr. Penryn against his will, and the Mad Graf, who will not behave himself like any ordinary person—I wonder that you had heard so little of him as to expect it—is to steal a march upon us, if the fancy take him, against our will.’

‘I have told the fellow,’ protested her father in some heat, ‘that he may come or stay as he chooses; for that matter the steamboat is public property; but we cannot be parties to the boat’s being kept back—I have heard of such tricks—to enable him to come up, and we do not bind ourselves to wait for him at any particular point.’

‘And even if he arrive like a commonplace man,’ said Mary mischievously, ‘it is getting serious. Papa, have you thought of the consequences of taking not one, but two madmen on board? What if Taff Penryn should go down into the engine-room, play ducks and drakes with the machinery, and blow us all up, simply to judge, if he be spared for judgment, how far the force of steam will propel him? What if the Graf take a header from the bow just to see and hear how we shall stare and scream, and to put us to the trouble of saving him?’

‘I think we may trust to the steamboat

captain, and to the Graf himself, who has method in his madness. But remember the last importation was not my doing.'

'I freely absolve you from it,' said Mary.

As it was, the party started on the trip without hindrance, and without any odd exploit, which would have been mortifying to Mr. Carteret, on the part of the Graf. He thought better of it in the middle of his rampant vanity and self-will. He was so far coerced by the firm but courteous tone which had been adopted towards him on the part of the grave, quiet Englishman, the father of marriageable daughters, who yet did not defer by a hair's breadth to the Graf's immense capabilities as a marriageable man.

The Graf was only moderately late in striding down coolly to the landing-place, where the boat's bell was ringing with a hysteric vehemence of tingling, and in crossing the space of water which the lifted gangway had exposed, by a flying leap. It was a tame performance—though it did extract a stifled scream with a few heart throbs from Gisela, and some broad smiles from Fra and Lyd—to be given by a man who had fought his eleventh duel, and been in prison for the space of a year because of the same. That he had not made his escape from prison had been, and was to this day, a terrible chagrin to the poor Graf. He had indulged in attempts to escape, which had been hushed up because of his position; for, alas! the

ill-concerted attempts had proved abortive. In the meantime he was contented to stamp about majestically, or to climb to each coigne of vantage on which he could stand like a statue or a Childe Harold, as Mary confided to her father. At the same time she was forced to grant that it was an original version of the part, as she never imagined that the Graf had read the poem even in a translation, neither did she hold that misanthropy had anything to do with his cue, which was dignity and total irresponsibility in tatters.

Perhaps, after all, the Graf's gratuitous display of himself in solitary conspicuousness—the earnestness of which somehow borrowed an air of sombreness—was not unwarranted, as unquestionably it was not unprized. From the best-informed official to the humblest fellow-passenger who recognised him, the good fortune of being literally in the same boat with the Mad Graf of Felsberg was hugged, and passed around with nods, winks, and nudges.

But if the Graf could not help being impressed by Mr. Carteret's well-bred indifference to his pretensions, he was still more struck with Mrs. Carteret's unworldliness. He was welcome to her as the girls' friend and Baroness Gisela's cousin, whom the young people liked to have in their train. For her part she could not say that she found him an agreeable young man, but tastes differed. As to all the talk of the antiquity of

his title and the extent of his estates, they might be worth counting in a German noblemen, but she was an English squire's wife.

Mary's peculiarities dawned more gradually on the Graf, though they were to be the crowning marvel. He began to notice this day that she did not look at or pay attention to him more than she did to anyone else. She was quite as attentive to that out-of-elbows student fellow, who might be a secretary, or tutor, or Kammer Musikus, to such a magnate as himself or to Mr. Carteret, who, in his English republicanism—here the Graf, who was by no means clearheaded, confounded an Englishman with an American—chose to treat the retainer as an equal.

The other girls were engrossed with the Graf and in ecstasies at his presence ; but Miss Carteret took it very composedly. While her sisters, and even little Gisela, wore their nicest travelling dresses and prettiest plumed hats in his honour, Miss Carteret was the handsomest of any of them, and at the same time, as if she had forgotten all about herself, in a dingy blue gown, which the Graf was not able to identify as an old favourite yachting dress, and in a rough shady, shapeless hat, which looked as if she could put it off or on, or fill it with rubbishy flowers or fir cones, without any detriment.

Taff Penryn had indeed descended to the engine-room, and remained some minutes there,

but apparently it did not occur to him to do more than report disparagingly that the machinery was out of date and shockingly ineffective; afterwards he sat down submissively on deck, and looked about him like his neighbours.

There was not a shade of hostility, while there was nothing that admitted of fraternity, even during an excursion among the woods and mountains, between the two young men of the party. It was not that the Graf stood out on his superior rank, unless in being more punctilious and ceremoniously civil in any personal intercourse with Taff Penryn, than Mary had ever heard of the Graf's showing himself to his contemporaries. He was too great a Graf for insolence to social inferiors.

However this pleasure party remained long engraven on the Graf's mind, as having done more to open wide his restless blue eyes—so far removed from Taff Penryn's still blue eyes—than any other separate event in the whole course of his education. Among other curious studies it presented to the but half-comprehending Graf—the contemplation of a young man of some genius, of great application, and of one fixed purpose, which was beyond the conception of his fellow-men, and altogether outside of himself.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE ELBE.

AFTER the late fine weather the early morning had been gloomy and rather threatening, but the travellers had made the best of it. The scenery had been pretty from the beginning, with white houses in greenery and perpetual little terraced vineyards rising to some height on one side.

Opposite Blasewitz, at another village orné summer retreats of the richer Dresdeners, in a summer house which had belonged to the Körner family, Schiller had written ‘Don Carlos;’ and in another house further up the river Weber had composed ‘Der Freischütz,’ and ‘Oberon.’

Barges passed the steamboat with the motto painted above the cabin door, ‘Got mit uns,’ just as Mary on her first arrival in Dresden had read on the front of a house opposite her hotel the distich—

‘Wer Got vertraut,
Hat wohl gebaut.’

A quaint little village church, with a round bell

tower and black spire to show above the snow in winter, stood well out into the river. Every summer evening its bell rang to call the cattle from the neighbouring pastures to the milking ground.

The long, low, royal palace of Pilnitz, one in a cluster of princely Schlösser gathered together in the neighbourhood, came in sight. It formed a square, with innumerable little burnished pinnacles all over the roof. Its grounds were laid out in terraces and labyrinths formed by high beech and yew hedges, which were gravely said to be provided for court flirtations. There was also talk of a charming little court theatre which had fallen into disuse, but was to be resumed. Still, the great attractions of Pilnitz were the noble river, with the wooded island just in front of the palace, and the King's vineyards, extending along the heights.

It was Taff Penryn who was the pleasant gay cicerone of these parts. The river, the sailing, and the scenery had drawn him out of himself, and stimulated—well-nigh intoxicated him, as the beer, the music, and a comrade or two had acted upon him at the smoking concert.

Mr. Carteret congratulated himself on the improvement.

Mary gladly profited by the fit ciceroneship.

The Graf, who was a silent young man by nature, as well as rather ignorant from a neglected education, drew near, listened, and stared a little.

‘How can the fellow do it?’ he said, simply, in his laboured French, for his English was all but null, to Fra. ‘He speaks as if he were reading out of a book—without being so tiresome—what a memory he must have!’

‘People like him have not much to cumber their memories, Herr Graf,’ answered Fra, loftily.

Mary was forced to lean over the side of the boat to hide her laughter. Fra had included herself with the Graf. Even so far as he was concerned, it was difficult to realise, what Mary knew to be true, that he had great interests depending upon him—but the idea of Fra’s mind being too cumbered for traveller’s tales! Well, if the Graf ever shared his lordship and lands with Fra, of which there was not the slightest symptom, there would be a mad Gräfin to keep company with the Mad Graf. Fra had just such another outrageous conception of dignity and originality, only she had not as yet so fine a field to display it in.

The weather began to brighten, and the blue sky to appear, though the day was not clear.

The rafts were on each side of the steamboat, undulating like live creatures, while the men in front and the men behind, guided them with their long poles. Taff Penryn showed Mary how they were moored by the banks at night; and she watched one of the men in his dripping sea boots cooking his mid-day meal at the stove in the centre of the barge.

Mary's attention strayed away from the barge-man to an elderly peasant couple in the steerage of the steamboat. The man with a tanned leather face, wore yellow breeches, a brown coat and cap, and smoked a large yellow wood pipe with a double bowl, while he cast furtive, admiring, but still phlegmatic glances at the Graf. The brisk old wife, whose skin was little fairer than her weather-worn partner's, sat in her jacket and headkerchief, and knitted with all her might, sticking her knitting-needles, when she was not using them in her hair under the kerchief. She did not miss a single look or gesture, either of the Graf's or of any other man, woman, or child's in the company.

The town of Pirna, half on the one side, half on the other, and with a bridge under which the steamboat passed, spanning the Elbe, looked its best in this season of fruit blossoms. The grand old fortress of Sonnenschein, a huge barrack, furnished with towers, was situated on the height above the town. Mary could not resist glancing comically at her father, for the fortress had been utilised as a formidable lunatic asylum.

From Pirna the quarrying of the hills for sandstone to be transported by the river commenced. It injured the natural line of the banks, and lent a new and staring look to portions of the scenery. On the other hand, the rich yellow colour of the quarried sandstone

among the prevailing green of the wooded heights lit them up as with gleams of golden sunshine.

The scenery had grown wild and beautiful, the broad river passed through a succession of deep-wooded gorges, dove-tailing into each other, and sometimes shutting it in like a lake. Out of the blue green of the vast pine woods, against which straggling birch or beech trees stood out vividly in their tender spring green, grey rocks rose in the forms of towers and battlements—not fluted as in basalt, but placed in layers, or rather built stone upon stone, and hardly distinguishable from massive masonry. Sometimes tremendous single blocks of grotesque shape varied the effect.

Mary had never beheld a spot which answered so well to the old-world legends of the Titans and the Gods. But no heavy pall of cloud or raging tumult of the heavens hung or surged over it; instead, there was a benign though not very bright spring sky—the mild blue all dappled and flecked with white cloudlets like a flock of harmless sheep. And here was one of the triumphs of modern science in the shape of passenger and luggage boats coming up twice a day, with the whiz of their steam and the clatter of their paddle-wheels, to bring civilisation and comfort—one might be thankful, but, alas! in inevitable sequence to lend the last prosaic touch, even as it brought the last nineteenth-century news from the world into the wilderness. There remained only for

Taff Penryn to pierce the deep secret of perpetual motion to render the transformation of this and every other wilderness complete.

The party were close upon the Bastei, the most gigantic of the natural battlements, which rise from the river and command the wooded underground.

As they sailed past, with even the Graf moved to ignore himself, and the three younger girls to lose sight of him, crowd with the rest of the passengers to the side of the steamboat, and gaze up with something of awe reflected in their eyes at the giddy frowning height—there was descried far overhead, first a tiny building on the summit of the crags, and then human figures, like pigmies, clustered on a bridge, which might have been a straw, leaning against a balustrade, and waving greetings from their eyrie to the fellow-creatures, like so many flies on a leaf floating along the river at their feet.

The plan was that the party should land at Rathen, take luncheon, climb to the Bastei, return and dine off what dinner could be found at the Erbgericht Haus, and then sit on the terrace waiting for the evening steamer which should carry them on to Schandau.

Mary's first impression of Rathen was that it was a little paradise, with its cottages, yellow or white, crossed with wood and roofed with red tiles, set among lindens and blossoming cherry-trees,

planted by the river, and having its own ruin of its own grey feudal castle on a rising ground just beyond.

But a short familiarity convinced her that even in a little paradise flaws and failings have to be met and mastered. The sole spring waiter could speak nothing save German, but, by dint of his twice-a-day visit to the Dresden steamboat, was a man about town acquainted with all the gossip and scandal of the hour, compared to the peasants around him. After his last descent to the boat—a descent which had secured this goodly group of passengers, with their travelling bags, as well as the briefest of chats with the men on the gangway—he snatched a moment to convey to the short-skirted, bare-legged Kammer Mädchen such a sensational narrative in three words of the Mad Graf and his feats, as caused the girl to gape and grin and expose the absence of half of her front teeth. The story, though it was evidently more pleasurable than painful, resulted in dire confusion.

It is true that everywhere in Germany, as in Switzerland—it is no matter how remote or even inaccessible the place may be, if the scenery or the history of the place attracts tourists—there are to be found restaurants, with their terraces shaded by lime or birch trees overhanging the river—if there be a river—carefully supplied with little tables and wicker chairs without, and at least one

long habitable room, *Fremde Salon*, or *Speise Saal*, within. But it is not the way of tourist to appear at these restaurants with the first flicker of spring sunshine; and for those travellers who have ways of their own, they must be content to accept the situation in halting attendance and scantily-filled homely larders.

Mrs. Carteret could not have conceived the state of matters, or provided against it, had she been able to anticipate it. She had to submit to be baffled, to hearing Mr. Carteret, a much-enduring man in such circumstances, murmuring that the cold meat, the only meat to be had, was like slices of cork. She herself was reduced to protesting that the omelette must have been made on no principles of cooking that she had ever heard of. She had to listen to Fra and Lyd, after they had swallowed all the white bread in the establishment, clamouring in vain for more. She had to consider that she had been a party to bringing others—the Baroness, the Graf, though these two, being Germans, seemed in some measure accountable for the disastrous deficiencies and Taff Penryn—into the strait. And this was lunch. There was the still more dismal prospect of the dinner to be looked forward to.

The immediate misfortune pressed most heavily on Mrs. Carteret, who, to do her justice, cared as little for what she ate or drank as any lady belonging by right to a land of solid joints and

light puddings. She was worried ; a headache followed, and she was not fit to walk to the Bastei with the rest of the party. She wished nobody to stay behind on her account ; but it was clear everybody would not leave her forlorn.

Most people are familiar with the depressing effect of any—the smallest accident and division of forces occurring in such an excursion. At last a compromise was accomplished—one of the sure-footed ponies, plentiful enough in the summer, was procured. Mrs. Carteret, who had not ridden much since she was a bride, was induced to mount, and thus attempt the ascent, with the guide at the poney's head and her husband by her side, a mode of progress which she did not altogether dislike.

Thus the elders led the way, and the young people followed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BASTEI.

‘I WILL be your guide for the day, do let me,’ cried Taff Penryn, still drunk with the air, the pleasant stir, the fine scenery. ‘I know the country as well as the guides; and I promise you I shall not try to get money out of you, though I need it badly,’ he added, with a merry jest at his own impecuniosity, which was so improper that it caused Fra to frown and the Graf to stare amain.

The way led first by a pretty little saw-mill and a high green bank starred with wood sorrel; the road then wound round and round by a sandy track, the base of the huge Bastei. Nobody’s breath was taxed as yet; but in a few minutes the party were in a wood toiling up a footpath, sometimes climbing steps, sometimes defended from the loose soil of steep declivities by rustic fences, sometimes creeping under boulders, on which the ambition of small men had carved names, using ladders for the purpose, that the notoriety might reach high enough. At one point a king had

condescended to head in gilt letters the vulgar throng.

The Graf looked wistfully and excitedly at these records; he loitered over them and relinquished ungallantly for their leisurely inspection what had been to the girls the dear delight of his assistance in climbing. It was not unmixed delight, especially to Baroness Gisela and Lyd. He had a habit of snatching at and dragging along the object of his assistance, which, as Mary remembered, was in keeping with his style of dancing, when he danced. She had seen him not only button his coat, but deliberately empty his pockets, before he took up a partner and whirled her round the room in the fieriest and most frantic of waltzes or polkas.

The Graf had never asked Mary to dance, and now she absolutely declined his brusque offers of help, especially after she saw him catch up Gisela, and in spite of her alarmed, '*Ach! bitte, bitte, Fritz,*' spring with her across a chasm, and set her down so shaken that there were no more of her enraptured '*Himmelisches*' and '*Wunderschöns,*' for some time to come.

'Thou little goose, didst thou think I had not strength enough to carry thee—thou little sparrow, or that I should let thee go?' he remonstrated, scornfully. It was play to him, though it was torment to her. 'He is so strong,' she gasped to

Mary, with whom she had taken refuge, 'and he is naturally fond of showing his strength.'

'At the expense, as well as in the service of, the weak,' answered Mary; but Gisela did not follow her, and imagined that she was not comprehending Mary's English.

Taff Penryn vindicated his claims to be an excellent escort, by calling attention to each eccentric giant of a gaunt and grim or well-grown and rounded-out mass of a rock as it rose in turn, and came into view in the forest boundary, naming the rocks by the countrypeople's foolish familiar names, and telling each fond legend that clung to them. Here was the 'Turk,' so named on account of a supposed resemblance to a Turk's cap. There was the 'Maiden's Spring,' commemorating the leap from the jagged summit by which a true German maiden preferred death to dishonour. This was the 'Locomotive,' a very modern and prosaic nickname—it seemed people's fancies were departing along with their rudeness. That was the 'Sheep,' not much better. But the '*Kaisers Krone*' was a vast improvement; and yonder was the '*Nonnenstein*,' to the sharp pinnacle of which he could assure them a stainless nun was borne out of the corruption of her convent, and in that refined air, though not on the highest pinnacle on which she had first alighted, she wore out the rest of her life in piety and industry. He would confess that he should have preferred if she had either remained

aloft, a feminine version of St. Simon Stylites, or if she had trudged back to her convent and done her best to reform it. There was a great descent involved in her coming down at all—after she had once got up, she might have been preserved in her exaltation—there was also a painful inutility in her wasting her piety and austerity on the desert air. But of course he was a heretic, and could not understand ; he had nothing to do with the explanation, he had the happier duty of telling the stories.

He told them with such mingled spirit and fun, that though some of his audience struggled after his English speech with much trouble, even while they had German names and references to hold on by, everybody applauded.

Taff Penryn, to Mary's amusement, achieved a small triumph, if he had cared for it.

Fra, in her cleverness and quickness of repartee, was attracted in spite of herself, and diverted for a moment from her cynosure the Graf. She was tempted to show off some of her schoolroom learning for the benefit of the shabby, semi-crazy student. How and where did he get up all that nonsense ? asked Fra. What weight did he put on people's legends ? Had he ever read Max Müller's books ? (This was a smart misappropriation of works only known by name to Fra.) For her part she thought it was great nonsense to trace the source of a thing so cumbrous, and yet so clipped, as a language. If she ever took up any study of the

kind, she would make nurseryrhymes her speciality, and confine herself to it. There might be something in discovering the historical origin of

‘Three little kittens
That lost their mittens
And got no Christmas pie;’

at least, historical parallels could be found—Jack and Gill might stand for the first and the last Napoleon, and Little Jack Horner for Bismarck.

(It need hardly be said that the first of Miss Fra’s parallels was lamentably halting, and the second was not original.)

But Taff Penryn merely looked at her, and then answered her literally, and rather briefly.

He supposed that she was laughing at him, which was true, only he did not understand that this was a mark of condescension and honour on Fra’s part, and that he ought to have protested and argued, laughed back again, and prolonged the game. He did not mind being laughed at; but while he was very fond of children—he really did not care greatly for girls—unless friendly, sisterly girls, and even they were sometimes a little silly and stupid, without much information or common sense. He could not have flirted though he had tried; he had had more to do in the past, he had a world more to do in the future.

He could play—he had been in the full swing of play a moment before; but it was much the sort of game which he would have maintained with a party of fellow-students; he had no special game

for women, and that might imply a defect in the young man's composition.

As to playing with love, he would as soon have played with the arcana of perpetual motion. Besides his ideal of womanhood did not find its realisation in immaturity and ignorance, though he saw that Fra Carteret was very pretty, and he heard that she had a glib, jibing tongue, amusing enough to those who relished and kept themselves disengaged for such amusements.

But for Taff Penryn there was little attraction—however perfect the beauty might be in form and colouring—in a toy, or an elf, or a barber's block. He thought—when dim, vague visions, which he sought instinctively to drive away, flashed across his mind—of a woman 'divinely tall and most divinely fair,' not so much in physical as in spiritual stature. She might be as small as a fairy in body, even irregular in feature, or sallow in complexion, for aught Taff Penryn cared, if she were only large in soul—a wise, generous, beneficent creature—fallible, else she must have mated with an angel—but having something great, even in her errors, which ought to lean to virtue's side, and with her greatness summed up in the most essential—the crowning charm of transcendent modesty.

What most distant resemblance to Taff Penryn's heroine existed in nine-tenths of the heroines of the day? It did not exist in Fra Carteret, with

her slenderness and prettiness, her Anglo-Chinese deformities of tiny hands and feet, her supreme accomplishments in her own eyes, which yet admitted of their possessor being an utterly inexperienced, ill-informed girl. These accomplishments had about the same relation to her mind as the streamers and bead garniture, with which she was fond of adorning herself, had to the main body of her dress. Fra was another order of being in her sharpness and selfishness, her mixture of bouncing and bridling, her causeless, soulless fits of glee, and her equally empty and petty bouts of gloom.

After Fra, Lyd was nobody, and the poor little Baroness only struck Taff Penryn with a tender sentiment of pity, which he should have liked to express by chivalrous regard for her comfort and pleasure—only she seemed much to prefer the attentions of the Graf, her cousin. The nearest approach to Taff Penryn's heroine was made by Mary Carteret, who came across him consciously this day—just as she had come across him unconsciously more than once before—with a sense of womanly charm.

He saw so far that she was a fair young woman, and not a pretty girl. He would not have objected to knowing her better, and coming to confide in her, for he felt abstractedly that she might have suited him better than any one of the sisterly friends he could claim. But she was an English girl of the rank of a squire's daughter,

like the other two. No doubt, though she could use her eyes and ears, had read and thought a little for herself, entertained, at least, a passing concern for her fellows in the shape of the raftsmen, and seemed to be her father's companion, and not simply his pet or plaything, her thoughts were like those of her kind. Her ideas were confined to æsthetics, if not to bodily ease and luxury, to a little condescending casting of her crumbs to the Lazaruses at her door, in the pauses of seeking a sultan—the provider of a suitable establishment in town and country houses, parks and gardens, carriages and servants—instead of a mate with whom to toil, and to whom to minister.

Fra's few overtures to Taff Penryn came to a summary conclusion, and left her free to complain pettishly to Mary when the sisters were left behind for a moment. 'I wonder what can possess papa to inflict on us that horrid, slovenly, boorish, cracked fellow, though he were ten times an old neighbour's son. I quite wonder that the Graf Von Felsberg (Fra, like the Vicar of Wakefield, loved to be particular with titles, though she too had danced at a Lord Lieutenant's ball) submits to the association.'

Mary had to call Fra back, and ask wherein lay the slovenliness and boorishness of Mr. Penryn, to whom they were all indebted for lightening the way.

'Murray or Baedeker would have done as well,'

said Fra, holding up a red volume derisively. 'They have the most of his precious fables, and we don't have to ask them to sail and lunch and dine with us—not that the prince of publishers, Lord Byron's John Murray, would not have been good company. Don't you see there is a great orange smudge on one of his hands? and he proposed to keep his knife and fork throughout luncheon.'

'The last was because he saw there was no change at hand, and he did not wish to give trouble or hurt the feelings of the people at the restaurant. Don't you notice how civil he and other foreigners are in such circumstances? Indeed, Fra, I think it is we who should take a lesson in civility. The Germans show real consideration for hosts and waiters and chambermaids. Didn't you observe that the Baroness and the Graf acted in the very manner of which you complain?'

'I wonder they could,' said Fra, candidly; 'but at least they have not smudges on their hands, and they do not wear coats that one is ashamed to be seen speaking to in a *Speise Saal* or a steamboat.'

'I don't speak to a coat, Fra; and more than that, I don't think you had any particular objection to speak to the wearer of the coat on the hill a minute ago. As to the shabbiness, are we not all miserably shabby contrasted with the wife and daughters of the great London salesman, distancing all competitors in costliness of dress and equipage in Dresden, this spring? The shabbiest of us all is

Baroness Gisela. I should not have spoken of it had not you introduced the subject,' said Mary, demurely. 'However, there is no shutting our eyes to the fact. Her house gown—you know how near it is to the bones, Fra—is a thousand times better than this meagre attempt at a smart travelling dress. I am surprised that Madame Marck could send her niece abroad like this.'

'Oh, Madame Marck knows that the Baroness may wear anything,' said Fra, taking high ground; 'and Gisela is a darling. I'm sure I don't mind what she wears'

'No more do I, Fra,' said Mary; 'but may not a Baroness set a fashion, or must it only be for people of high degree, like herself? And would you not have minded, though you had been forced to take a journey in company with Baron Von Liebig, and he had presented all the colours in the rainbow printed on his hands?'

'Don't talk nonsense, Polly. Liebig indeed! who gave us ready-made beef-tea, and a lunatic, believing in the Elixir of Life, or what is it?'

The idea of Taff Penryn's quixotic faith had a totally different effect on the two sisters—in Mary it excited lively interest, a certain amount of yearning sympathy and wonder, not untinged with awe; in Fra it produced utter contempt.

'If Taff Penryn obtain the water of life, and revel in perpetual youth, his coat will become of

little consequence, even to you, Fra, when you are faded and failing,' said Mary.

'Oh! I am a long way from that yet,' said Fra, with one of her notes of exultation; I am not major for months to come.'

'I think you might wish to shorten them,' said Mary. 'It is true that few women's majorities introduce them to a foretaste of power. But to think that a woman should not long for any sign of her womanhood, that she should hold back from it, and desire rather to remain indefinitely in the unripeness, even if it be sweet and full of promise, of her girlhood! Fancy a lad who never panted to be a man, but craved to be a perpetual hobble-de-hoy!'

'Oh! but you know, Mary, they are detestable—not like girls. And remember there are such things as sour plums, dear, and foxes that have lost their tails. And pray don't mount your stilts climbing the Bastei; it might be dangerous, when, anyhow, one must mind one's feet.'

When Mary and Fra rejoined the rest of the party, they were high enough among the woods and rocks to command grand points of view—one of them including the fine old Schloss Hohenstein, converted into a reformatory.

They were close on a haunt of the Robber Knights, the pest of mediæval Germany. Taff Penryn took pains to search out and make plain the different traces of them in the locality, the

marks where their drawbridge had been hung and their gates had been slung, and the narrow, frightfully steep steps up the precipice, by which the marauders had borne their booty to their rude castle or *burg* on an isolated rock. That *burg* had possessed two unsurpassable advantages—it had been totally inaccessible to the pursuers of these days, the moment the drawbridge was removed, and it had commanded a far stretch of the only road, with a great reach of the river. No band of soldiers in the pay of emperor or elector could steal up to surprise and slay the human wolves in their lair; no barge conveying hapless traveller or wary merchant, not even an abbot or a friar brandishing the terrors of excommunication, could venture into these waters without being pounced upon, stripped, kidnapped, and compelled to taste the robbers' rough fare, until a ransom was forthcoming.

As the nineteenth-century visitors to the old scene of lawless might and bootless terror were peering down into the wooded gulphs—all one dusky, pine-tree green, though the season was spring—and craning their necks and straining their eyes to look up at the dark waving crest of the rock, which, after all, was more like an eagle's nest than a wolf's lair, the Graf's eyes glittered with much the same envy that they had held for the inscriptions on the rock.

Mary also was smitten with a high vaulting

ambition. She had been reading with her father lately various accounts of the tremendous exploits accomplished, the hairbreadth escapes effected, and at last the awful penalties suffered by these Robber Knights. The narratives of plundered, murdered victims, and abducted damsels, with the final retribution as withering and wasting as anything which had gone before it, had made a lively impression on Mary's mind. She desired to communicate that impression in the face of the den where such tragedies had been wrought out. She was prompted to enter the lists as a story teller with Taff Penryn, who, like a courteous rival, when he saw what she intended, stood aside and gave her the lead.

She felt rather shaky about her dates, and was dubious whether she might not commit murder on her own account, on proper names. But it was not dates or names that she wished to share with her companions—it was the vivid tale of doughty deeds and cruel wrongs—cruelly avenged, combined with those elements of merry humour and tender pity, without which such records lose their charm for all save the savage in heart, in their trenchant ferocity and unrelieved gloom.

Fra was the most impatient of Mary's listeners, but even Fra could not in that place choose but listen.

Lyd shuddered and drew in her breath, came nearer to Mary, and bade her go on, as she had

clamoured to her to tell some too enticing fiction of the Babes of the Wood or Red Riding Hood in the days when Lyd's five fitted well into Mary's twelve years.

Gisela was still more moved; for were not these stories among the legends of her cradle? only she had never heard them told before with such life-like vivacity and infectious enthusiasm. The puzzling circumstance was that it was the eldest Miss Carteret whom Gisela—taking Mary at Fra and Lyd's word—had been accustomed to regard as so old—somehow, stiff and proper, and to avoid accordingly, who indulged with all her heart in incidents with regard to which Gisela herself had always cherished an instinctive perception that they were a great deal too romantic—though they had really happened, once upon a time—to be imparted to Fra and Lyd. Why, if the party had not been standing in the scene of some of the events, and if they had not been so pithily given by Miss Carteret, Fra and Lyd would have laughed them down as ‘tall old-world bosh,’ too improbable, and, supposing they were true, mere raw-head-and-bloody-bone details, with which the girls were happy to say they had nothing to do.

The Graf stood as one spell-bound. Here was another marvellous speaker, and, as it happened, on matters which the Graf could not only understand, but which stirred his Graf's nature to its very depths. Mary saw him thrusting about his yellow hair, where another man would

have pulled his moustache, and felt his fascinated blue eyes dwelling upon her, without any sense of danger, with only a comical recollection. ‘He will inevitably cry, “*Donner und Blitz!*” appalled both by my length of tongue and my strength of memory. He will compare the result in my case also to a book, only not so *mühsam*.’

When Mary had finished—feeling a shade of shame for her performance, though, in reality, she had simply shown, without premeditation, some amount of a rare, and growing rarer, enviable faculty—the fine gift of conversation and the capacity of story-telling—she was impelled to say to Taff Penryn, ‘It was very good of you to overlook my offences in dates and names just now. I am conscious that I must have tried your patience.’

‘No, no,’ he said, cordially; ‘it was a case where great accuracy was not called for; and I could not have set you right more than once or twice. You told the stories very well for an Englishwoman.’

‘But you are an Englishman,’ she retorted quickly, with a faint sensation of pain, she could not have told why, caused by his words.

‘I!’ he exclaimed with a smile—‘I am a citizen of the world; and, for anything more, I should say I belong to Germany.’

The rest of the party’s progress—fortunately they were near the top—was spoiled to Mary by

the Graf. Whether piqued by the sight of these crow-steps in the rock, which the Robber Knights had mounted in their raids, and on which farther light had been thrown by Mary's narratives, he began to use, or rather abuse, his long legs, in order to get into various situations of difficulty and danger, even to the extent of abandoning, for their sake, the authorised road to the summit. And the worst of it was that he served as an evil example to Fra, who sprang off, scrambling like a kid, without a kid's sureness of foot ; while Lyd and the Baroness—their breath already short and their feet stumbling—toiled in the wake of the first two, like stray sheep.

‘I am not such an old woman as you, Polly, and some other people whom I don't choose to mention,’ called back Fra defiantly.

The last shot was fired at Taff Penryn, who was walking along quietly in the right path.

‘Does the zest of danger free you from all responsibility ? Look where you are going, and who are following you,’ entreated Mary.

‘Shall I follow the children and look after them ?’ suggested Taff Penryn, still gaily, to encourage Mary ; and when he who knew the ground kept the others in sight, and shouted out counsels, and warnings to them in time, Mary was comforted. At the same time her imagination was tickled with the wrath which Fra, not to say the Graf, would feel if they heard the term

children applied to them ; for, though Fra hugged her girlhood, she had absolutely renounced her childhood. She was even annoyed and offended by being occasionally classed in the category to which her mind and manners answered fully—that of a half-formed, giddy, not very well-bred schoolgirl.

Mary continued to think over the subject as she scaled what was left of the ascent with a foot which could distance Fra's by miles when there was no excitement of a race, no stimulus of opposition, only the healthful, commonplace attractions of some country road—along which Fra would scour, indeed, till she suddenly collapsed in disgust, and retreated to stretch her slender frame on a sofa, and shut herself up in her humours, or in a book, which all the time she would loudly proclaim was not worth reading. 'Danger for danger's sake,' said Mary to herself. 'I suppose there is merit of a manly kind in it ; and it is certainly one of the chief fascinations in these stories, which I was so left to myself as to repeat. In addition, one often recognises the passion for encountering and overcoming dangers as prevailing in really fine characters. But it must be taken with reservation, else it becomes an irreverent folly, little less hideous than that of self-martyrdom.'

At last Mary reached the top ; but, alas ! there was no solitary height from which to feel one's own littleness in looking down in peace on the

forest trees transformed to so many stalks of club moss, with the river dwindled to a thread.

There was a *Restauration*, a wooden house fitted up with tables, chairs, and a balustrade, all complete, like that below. In a shed, early as the season was, there was a band of musicians discoursing music, certainly noisy, though Mary was willing to concede it might be good of its kind, particularly as Fra and Lyd, who had elected themselves musical judges, pronounced it unexceptional, and declared themselves enchanted with the sudden effect at the crisis.

Mary was driven to speculate on different spheres of fastidiousness; to ask herself how and why it was that the girls who could not forgive the single knife and fork relegated to each at the morning's luncheon, relished the music which offended Mary on the breezy summit of the Bastei. She had not disliked, but had enjoyed what Fra and Lyd had groaned over—the circumstance of two young men, who sat, their hats crowned with green, by the wayside, and woke the woods with their deep, rough voices. It was the old story of the fitness of things, which Fra and Lyd as girls refused, in a general sense, to take into consideration.

At first Mary thought, as she tried to shut her ears, and make out the great rocks—the huge Lilienstein, at this point like a mighty wall, the rock fortress of Königstein, the Pfaffenstein, and

more *steins* than either her eyes or mind could take in, in the shoreless ocean of forest green, and which the regular guide was at that moment naming to Mr. Carteret—that nobody save her father, who was knitting his brows in a manner perfectly comprehensible to Mary, sympathised with her in the plague of the brass band.

To be sure, Mrs. Carteret, who had made a futile essay to buy white bread to be carried down to the Erbgericht Haus by the Elbe, remarked, with sarcasm in her voice, ‘Fiddles instead of a common wheaten loaf!’

But the remainder of the party had seated themselves among some other wayfarers before the little tables, to rest and be regaled at once by the sweet *kuchen*, the strong coffee, the sharp Rhenish wine, and the sensational airs from Meyerbeer. The Graf was even so elated as to make use of one of his scanty English words, ‘jolly,’ which he pronounced like the French equivalent for pretty; and to express in addition a truly English sentiment, ‘that one might kill a little time up here.’

Mary could not know that Taff Penryn either penetrated or had any part in her momentary chagrin. He was arching his eyebrows and shrugging his shoulders, muttering his own protest, ‘Kill time at his age, with so much before him, so much to do, and when my moments are by far too few, though I count them up and hoard

them as no miser hoards his gold! Why cannot he lend me this time which he treats as a mortal enemy, a vile criminal and scourge to society, were it only that I might take with it the necessary recreation which wiseacres and learned physicians declare is to prevent me from dying of brain disease and nervous exhaustion before I am thirty, or, what is infinitely harder, before my work is well begun?'

This murmur, the gist of which Mary could just guess, had no reference to her small trouble; and it was only when Taff Penryn looked round at her, and said aloud, with some pleasantry in his manner, 'There is a plague of popularity for places as well as for persons; don't you think so, Miss Carteret?' that she saw he understood her disturbance. She wondered for a moment whether, if he ever succeeded in doing—not the impossible, but something which no other man had done—and conferred a widespread benefit on the human race, would he be spoilt by short-sighted favour in the room of wholesome neglect, to the loss of his simplicity and earnestness?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RULING PASSION.

THE descent of the Bastei was a comparatively easy matter, but it cost the party the Graf, to the extreme mortification of two, and the misery of one, of the younger girls. He loitered and loitered behind the others, and vanished altogether long before the travellers reached the green field, in which several buxom Saxon lasses, in the invariable kerchief over the head, jacket, short petticoats, and with bare feet, were seen hoeing, and staring at the strangers, and were proudly pointed out by the agile old guide proper, as belonging to his twelve grandchildren.

At dinner no eagerly-looked-for Graf appeared, though the meal would have rewarded his exertions had he put them in practice. The resources of the house had been drawn forth in the absence of the party, and, so that one did not mind the order in which the entertainment was served, as Mrs. Carteret was too prone to do, or enquire over narrowly into the ingredients of *bier suppe*, *håring salat*, and *leberwürste*, the feast was not discreditable

to the cooks, or unrelished by the guests, unless where the absence of the Graf had bereft them of appetite. No doubt it had robbed the whole company, in the eyes of the onlookers, of the *éclat* which had attended it since its setting forth.

And still no Graf turned up on the terrace, where his fellow-pleasure-seekers disconsolately lingered, eating their last year's apples, sipping their coffee or their wine—the last out of tall, slim glasses, like that which Rembrandt flourishes in one of his portraits — watching the afternoon shadows grow longer and longer on the Elbe, which had so far to go.

When the boat came, Mr. Carteret, in accordance with his declared intention, stoutly resisting all entreaties and petitions from Fra and Lyd, set sail with the remaining members of the party.

Mary had to do what she could to console the Baroness, since Fra and Lyd were too depressed on their own account, and too much given to yield to their feelings, to seek to cheer their companion. They subsided on the most comfortable of the benches, half closing their eyes, and refusing to look any longer at the river scenery, while they did not forget to arrange their veils to guard their complexions jealously from anything so little formidable as a spring afternoon sun. Mary laughed, and scolded them a little, but she could not help pitying poor little Gisela's real distress, her twitching hands and trembling lips.

‘He is a man and a German,’ said Mary, encouragingly, ‘besides being a Graf; he will not be much put about by losing his way, or by being detained for a night. It is a pity, of course, because, very likely, we shall have to leave Schandau early, and he may not come up with us till we are at Herrnskretschen, on our way back. Still, you may depend upon it that we have remained long enough to hear if there had been really anything wrong. My father would not have left, if it had not been so. You know the Herr Graf is—a little—a little capricious, and uncertain in his movements.’

‘I know,’ said Gisela, meekly, ‘and I am very vexed that he should try people—English people especially—by his what you call eccentric ways.’

‘We are so eccentric ourselves that you need not mind.’

That was not what the Baroness was minding.

‘I did fear that he was hankering after these names which foolish persons have engraven on the rocks; that he did mean to break away and write his name the highest of all, since he could no longer hope to turn Schloss Felsberg into a Robber Knight’s hold,’ finished Gisela, with a faint smile, soon quenched in a mist of unshed tears.

‘I am sorry that I was so silly as to recall these stories,’ said Mary.

‘Oh, that did nothing—nothing at all,’ hastily interposed Gisela, with what Mary judged was

some jealousy lest the Graff's intellectual powers were not sufficiently acknowledged—perhaps also with a little impatience at Mary's having the presumption to imagine that she had influenced him. 'He knew all these stories, every one, already, and hearing them again could not cause him to be more anxious to outstrip his neighbours in some trial that was still open to him. He is proud, yes, naturally; and he is very brave and daring, like one of the old Knights,' said Gisela, with sparkling eyes. 'But what is there left for him to do, since there are neither men, women, nor goods to be carried away or to be set free?—my cousin would have played the deliverer well, for he has the good heart—oh, the kindest, the truest heart in the world!—and since prejudice—yes, I say that, Miss Carteret—and rivalry, and punctilio prevented poor Fritz's little faults being overlooked in the army, into which he should have entered and become a hero in our glorious war. He is very like my blessed Hugo; only my dear brother was poor, and had a thousand things to fight with in his rank, which could never, never come near a Graf Von Felsberg.'

Mary had difficulty in imagining a poor Graf Von Felsberg equally exempt from criticism, equally wasted by ill-considered notice and applause. She gave up the attempt, and said, 'Don't you think it is most probable, after all, that the Graf Von Felsberg has found us stupid, and tired of us, and

has exercised his independence, as he had quite a right to do, in withdrawing himself from us altogether? You know he did not belong to our party as it was planned, and he never promised to continue with us and see us through the excursion.'

'*Ach, nein!*' said Gisela, with some emphasis, 'the Graf was pledged to nothing; but he is not changeable, no, no. He has been the most faithful of cousins. Do you see that poor little watch he wears still? That was given to him by my mother at the time that she did give one the same to my Hugo. They were boys together, and they were so handsome, so manly! Fritz was much at our Schloss then. He was the motherless little fellow in those days, and was dear to my mother, who was his mother's sister. The sisters were married very differently,' explained Gisela, entering into the details *con amore*, and speaking with proud humility; 'so you would say, *mein Fräulein*, if you saw the Schloss Felsberg or any of his other sittings—see, I cannot count them with the fingers of one hand—and our poor little old ruinous barn of a Schloss Rudener. But he had need of my mother—she was good to him, and he has never forgotten it.'

Mary admitted willingly that the Graf's own peculiar faculty of memory was in itself admirable; and she suppressed as ungracious the next observation which rose to her lips—that he might ex-

press his constant remembrance in a more appropriate and practical manner.

The scenery was still perfect of its kind, especially about the quaint little town and impregnable castle of Königstein, with its flavour of much drilling, and which has acres within its natural enclosure, so that green tree tops wave over its battlements and cows are said to pasture behind the ramparts, while it owns an inexhaustible ice-cold well and keeps provisions in its store-rooms to last for twice twelve months. No wonder it becomes the refuge of Saxon kings in their extremity, and the hiding-place of the Aladdin's lamp treasures of the Green Vaults.

Unlike her sisters and Gisela, Mary was quite able to look up and enjoy Königstein, and to hear her father's explanation of the place, since she had ceased to have any other cicerone.

The Graf's was not the sole desertion from their band, though the second was less palpable and more in the spirit than in the body. Taff Penryn's person was still among them, or at least only so far removed from them as was implied by the other extremity of the boat, where he sat with his back half turned towards them, in deep discussion with a tall, spare, bent old man, whom he had detected, and hailed with unbounded delight on their coming on board. He had already announced, breathlessly and triumphantly, that he had been so fortunate as to encounter one of the

most notable chemists of the day, with whom he had formed a slight acquaintance, and who had been pleased to approve of his first steps in science.

Taff Penryn offered, with perceptible half-boyish reluctance, to introduce Mr. Carteret to his authority, an introduction which would no doubt have interfered with the confidential communication that had straightway been entered into between master and scholar.

But Mr. Carteret had declined, explaining his relinquishment of the opportunity of being presented to Herr Mönch to Mary, afterwards. He said it had made him sick to see the change in Taff Penryn's face, and he could not rid himself of the illiberality of the conclusion that this skin-dried mummy of a chemist was, for some motive of his own, aiding and abetting the fellow in his inexplicable hallucination.

‘It is rather humiliating to have our company fall to pieces like this before the end of our first day,’ said Mary to her father. ‘It does not signify much that these gentlemen’s presence was not of our seeking, or was a generous concession on our part to begin with. After they were here it became a point of honour with us that they should not seek to be elsewhere. Don’t you pity us poor young women, papa, since the defaulters happen to be young men? Their thus, in turn, “bolting”—I can call it by no other name—casts

a special stigma on our combined charms, or lack of charms.'

But Mr. Carteret would neither pity nor rally Mary on the defection. 'For Heaven's sake, don't speak to Penryn—he seems friendly with you—on the subject of his folly,' he enjoined on Mary. 'I can see discussion only confirms him in it.'

'Just once, papa,' entreated Mary. 'I should like to ask him one question, if you please; but I am afraid that I shall never have the opportunity. I don't think Mr. Penryn will care to enter on his experiments and the hopes of his life to me.'

The fact was that Mary burnt with curiosity to put her one question, and to hear how it would be answered. The opportunity was not so remote as she had imagined; on the contrary, it presented itself that very evening. It occurred when they had sailed farther and were nearing their destination, when the Lilienstein, which had become the great landmark, after having been lost to view for a time had again drawn in sight. The rock was looming behind the voyager like an extinct volcano in the evening sky—the rosy red of which was fast paling to saffron, and to a delicate apricot colour, melting by subtle shades of dimmest sea green into turquoise blue. And Taff Penryn had torn himself away from his master, and come up, with a shadow of self-reproach on his face, to Mary.

'That is the Forst Haus, Miss Carteret'—he pointed out the largest building in the line of

rustic hotels, with terraces and gardens by the water—‘you will like it for a resting-place. Was not Königstein a fortress to be scaled? I hope that you and Mr. Carteret have been having a pleasant time. I wish that I could have been of more use to you in the latter part of the sail, but there are chances which cannot be let slip. When a man is engaged on an arduous enterprise, he must seize every accidental advantage, he must bring every passing occurrence to bear on his life-long labour—he must lay aside ceremony’—Taff Penryn did not pretend to say happiness, or even inclination, as well as ceremony—‘if he is ever to lessen the immense odds against him and reach his goal.’

Taff Penryn spoke warmly, and yet with a degree of restraint in the intense earnestness of his vain pursuit, while a dusky colour rose in his brown cheek, and a warm glow awoke in his fixed far-seeing eyes.

‘You mean in the spirit of the Bible verse which bids a man train himself, as for the Greek games, and cast aside while he runs, every weight that may impede his progress,’ said Mary, softly.

He nodded, and smiled brightly, as on receiving encouragement, which was rare to him.

‘Mr. Penryn, will you tell me,’ said Mary, excited herself, as she laid hold of the opening, ‘how are you able to contemplate any force so strange and so unlike the present order of things as per-

petual motion? When I seek to see it at work in the world, it is as when I try to fancy what Heaven will be like—I cannot compass it—I feel that I must be there myself before I can imagine it. I have to fall back on the “eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard,” to console myself for my incapacity.’

‘That is it,’ said Taff Penryn, with passion, still repressed, yet thrilling through every feature of his face and tone of his voice. ‘And you believe in Heaven not the less. I cannot see the working of perpetual motion on earth, I only know how much it is wanted. I can only measure the fatal waste of human resource and energy, that goes to the renewing of what ought to be self-existent, self-productive, and which baffles all real progress. Think of the incalculable advance that would be made in every field of human labour, if man’s strength and skill were set free to direct and control motion, not to create it afresh with every rising of the sun! Then, indeed, discovery and invention would march on to supreme victory, and the wilderness and the solitary place would blossom as the rose.’

Mary was silent, looking at him in dumb doubt and admiration.

He continued to answer her unspoken objection: ‘It is not as if the principle had no foundation. Perpetual motion does exist in the planetary bodies. You may say it is God’s prerogative;

but He made man in his image, and who shall dare to limit his sovereign gifts? Men, or the devil in them, are craven-hearted; they have begun by doubting the possibility of every attainment which they have ever mastered. How should a navigator find a new world? It was a blasphemous presumption to sail on through an unknown sea. How should an astronomer learn that the sun stood still and the earth moved? Would God tell the secret to him? What drivelling idiocy to say steam could ever sail a boat as it is taking us straight up to that little pier before us, or drive a carriage as it is bringing in the trains yonder!’

Taff Penryn ended the conversation with a disdainful laugh as he indicated first the landing-place which they were approaching, and then the railway that had actually arrived at the other side of the river from Schandau.

The diminished, and for the most part dispirited, party were fain to follow the never-failing substantial sprite of a *Kellner* who appeared at the steamboat’s side, and beckoned, when there was no language in common, the tired travellers to their resting-place.

The Forst Haus, though it was a King’s quarters on his sporting expeditions, boasted nothing better than wicker or plain deal chairs in its long, low *Speise Saal*, the wooden floor of which was not even parqueted. Nevertheless, with its wrought-

iron stove, in humble imitation of the canopy over Quintin Matsy's well at Antwerp, and its pleasant look out on the green trees of the terrace and the river, it was not without an air of rustic refinement. The sleeping-rooms had their little beds without curtains, while the sole bed-clothes consisted of small down quilts. But the balconies commanded grand views of the Elbe and the wooded heights beyond.

Before Mary went to bed the young moon streamed white on the water, and seemed to lend light, not of the day, to such a mystic vision of contests with, and conquest over, the untamed and feebly guessed at powers which lie at the heart of nature, as that which Taff Penryn was bold enough to hold.

But when Mary started up and looked out again in the small hours, she found a surly grey sky, the water rushing down, 'ragged and brown,' and two steamboats, like ugly phantom boats, in the dim chill dawn, hurrying to meet each other, as if for mutual destruction, in a great crash, that would forebode the final demolition of all man's boasted machinery.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KUHSTALL.

THE morning was better than it had given tokens of, with slate-tinted clouds well up in the air and fields of blue appearing between them. What was still more to the purpose, everybody was re-inspired and inclined to cherish fresh hopes, however widely divergent the foundations of the hopes.

Mr. Carteret submitted to be introduced to Herr Mönch, and freed him from the suspicion of suborning Taff Penryn to his destruction. The chemist was a reasonable man, who had no particular desire to carry his laboratory into the woods with him. He would prefer, for his own solace, to discuss the general news of the day with Mr. Carteret, and even to concoct little jokes and compliments, such as he was under the impression women liked, to address to Mrs. Carteret and the young ladies.

Under the circumstances, Mr. Carteret was ready to beg Herr Mönch to join the pending expedition to the Kuhstall, as the arrangement which might on the whole be the best conceived to keep

him and Taff Penryn for that morning out of mischief.

So much harmony was prevailing that Fra, in view of the fun of mounting without a skirt on a pony led by a horse-boy up a mountain side, and in the recovered expectation of the tall apparition of the Graf starting up before them at any moment, forgot to complain once more of her father's perverse taste. He had invited, on the smallest pretext, an old man like a superannuated collector of taxes to join the party, and so added a finishing touch of absurdity to what was already their weak point in the shabby-coated, absent-minded student who acted as their escort. If only the Frau Gräfin saw them and their supporters! But Fra flattered herself that the Frau Gräfin was hundreds of miles away from beholding the predicament of her dear young friends. There was one exception to the harmony. Taff Penryn was another man from what he had been on the former morning. The fit of his peculiar malady was upon him as Mary had never seen it. He was restless, moody, and discontented at the turn of events. He could not forgive Herr Mönch for abandoning the questions and answers of scientific research to go out into the woods and enjoy himself as the chemist was there to do; and though Taff Penryn himself was not without a notion of the absolute necessity of such ungirding of the loins of the mind and yielding it up, if it were

not past being yielded up, to sheer animal exhilaration. But he was a unit in the party, and not of so much consequence that his dissatisfaction could mar its recovered pleasure.

The road up which the whole party drove, lay by the cheerful little white lodging-houses that nestled, some at the foot, some far up the heights enclosing Schandau, which, from its great natural beauty and accessibility by river and rail, forms a popular summer resort. The way traversed for six miles the Krischniss Thal, by its *Bach* a clear mountain stream, with only an occasional saw-mill and its tributary house or two to break the solitude. It was seeing in miniature and close at hand the scenery of the day before. The pines were waving overhead, the grey rocks were threatening to bar the path, and there at the travellers' feet stretched a variegated carpet of wild flowers—great tufts of white stellaria, a lilac flower like Venus' looking-glass, a little yellow potentilla, with patches of violets and pale blue myosotis.

The driver of the carriage pointed out an outline of an over-hanging rock resembling a man's face, and called it a 'living head;' and then he drew attention to the spectacle of a fir-tree growing out of a willow.

'We believe in that because we see it,' said Taff Penryn, in what sounded sulky reproach; 'but if any man had anticipated such a trifle—bah, for our faith!'

The end of the drive was indicated by one of the never-failing *Restaurations*, which in this case purported to be in the express honour of a neighbouring waterfall; but that, alas! was only brought into active operation by a man's retiring behind a rock and pulling a string, in the style of a shower-bath, and was a mockery of the fresh, wild nature in which it was supposed to play its part. The little fountain in front of the house was more excusable, and it had golden patches of marsh-mallow in place of summer Tom Thumb geraniums mingling with the ferns round its brink.

A sturdy peasant was hired as a guide, and troops of ponies, motley in colour and size, were led forth by their respective grinning lads and sober old men. Amidst some laughter ponies were mounted by the girls, who, in their lack of skirts, their fluttering veils, their attendant footmen, and their slow progress, in a row—rendered compulsory by the nature of the wood path, might have been taken either for a procession of the middle ages, or for the women connected with a modern hippodrome, just as fancy inclined.

As the party had driven along each chance traveller or stray tourist, in advance of the summer mob, whom they had encountered, had greeted them in a friendly fashion with a loud '*Guten Tag*,' or a lifted hat, which showed, as Fra said, antitheti-

cally, that they were out of the polite world. Now, on their fresh start, a rival party, descending from the Kuhstall and passing our friends, were impelled to call out, in critical appreciation of their array, in addition to the '*Guten Tag*,' '*Sehr gut gemacht*.'

The cavalcade wound up through the wood, enjoying its shade, its resinous odour, the crisp rustle of the fallen fir spines, the subdued song of the birds, and gathering meanwhile what information the inquisitive among them could pick up, according to their respective tastes, from the country people surrounding them.

The Baroness and Lyd learnt that their ponies were named respectively 'Hans' and 'Liese,' and that 'Hans' had an uncertain temper, while 'Liese' was as good as gold, and were satisfied with that information.

Fra discovered that the King sometimes came to hunt the many roes and the occasional stags, and that he stayed on these occasions at the Forst Haus, which filled her with satisfaction. She made herself aware, further, that the royal foresters wore green coats and a peculiar cap, like the Jäger in '*Der Freischütz*.'

Mr. Carteret ascertained that the woods belonged almost entirely to the Saxon state, which was one reason why so few castles were visible—indeed, not one except Hohenstein existed within three hours' journey. He never rested till he was

master of all the guide could tell him of the staple wood trade of the country, how the trees were cut down in the winter, in what manner they were brought to the saw-mills, and what proportion of rafts fell to Magdeburg, to Hamburg, and to Bremen.

Mrs. Carteret asked if there were many poor in the district, and was told there were few on the mountains, but many in the villages. Then she commented severely on the heavy loads which she saw the women carrying in the long wooden baskets on their backs, and was much scandalised when, her speech having been faithfully translated to the guide, he only laughed, as if the burdens which the women had been trained to bear, formed so many feathers in the men's caps.

Mary was relieved to be informed that the women were allowed to come to the wood for sticks, and could take all that fell of themselves, to burn along with the coarse coal which was brought up the Elbe. And she ratified her conviction that there were many blackbirds, thrushes, and finches, though there were no nightingales in these woods.

These gleanings were left for the English of the party; neither Herr Mönch nor Taff Penryn, who was three parts a German, found them necessary.

The Kuhstall was heralded by another *Restauration*, wooden this time, and which stood,

with its chairs and tables, at a considerable elevation in the middle of the wood. Guides, ponies, and footmen fell into not unpicturesque groups about the brown wooden house, and among the trees, as the dismounted sight-seers left them behind, and turned a corner to confront the low, solid stone arch of grass-tufted masonry forming the entrance to the Kuhstall, which, as everyone who has properly studied his 'Murray' or 'Baedeker' may know, gets its name from having been used as a refuge for cattle as well as for women and children in the Thirty Years' War, and again in the first Napoleon's wars. Beyond the few feet of level ground stretched a magnificent landscape—heights and hollows, thickly clothed with dense dark fir wood, for the most part interspersed with towering masses and pinnacles of stone—more *burgs* of Robber Knights—one had been in the Kuhstall itself. The Kleine Winterberg had the road to it marked by a tender green strip of beechwood among the pines; a blue peak rising behind the green, was Rosenstein, in Bohemia; over all a canopy of grim clouds descended lower and lower.

The visitors were fain to linger and gaze, and sketch the rude arch, the entrance to the platform which commanded so wild a world; but already the look of the sky was ominous, and by the time the party had gathered in the antler-hung room of the *Restauration* previous to setting forth anew for the two Winterbergs and the Pre-

bischthor, the rain began to fall. It was not a dignified storm becoming a mountain, Fra railed ; but a nasty little drizzle, which they might have had in the Prager Strasse. It was yet quite sufficient to blot out all save the nearest trees, and to render proceeding farther as impossible as it would have been useless.

The natives could give no hope of the clouds clearing away within a period of hours ; there was nothing left for the company but to get down the mountain as fast as they had got up, and take refuge in the carriages which should convey them back to Schandau.

Not for the Carterets and their companions were either the Kleine or the Grosse Winterberg—the latter twice the height of the Bastei, or the Prebischthor—an enlarged and still grander version of the Kuhstall ; or that loveliest village of Herrnskretsch, with its whitewashed, black-crossed, red-tiled houses among their feathery, blossoming cherry-trees, nestling in a little gorge at the foot of the wood-crowned rocks, and at the mouth of its own bright thread of a *Bach*, where it falls, and is lost in the broad Elbe.

The travellers could not even hope for the indulgence in the future except at a time indefinitely remote, since Mr. Carteret, like all men condemned to enforced idleness, felt an urgent necessity not to prolong his holiday beyond the three days set apart for it, and was already anxious, in the middle of his enjoyment, to return

to his confinement, and to the receipt of the English letters, which he expected at this season. As for Mrs. Carteret, she could not be answerable for the conduct of nurse and James, Dorte and Ursel, if left to their own devices a minute beyond the stated space.

It was the cup snatched from the lips the moment it was tasted; and even Taff Penryn roused himself from his own engrossing trouble to condole with Mary on the relinquishment of so much of their plan. But his condolences were drowned in the jubilee which hailed the arrival of the Graf, who converted the rain cloud for only too brief a moment into brilliant sunshine by walking upon the stage at a juncture which might have been considered unpropitious—save, indeed, that no juncture could be unpropitious for the Graf. He looked, in his light shooting coat, with his long-yellow hair turned back beneath his wide-awake, neither abashed for his offence, nor huffy at the supposition of any offence committed against himself. He had, on the contrary, a scarcely suppressed air of proud consciousness and serene congratulation, which Gisela immediately remarked, and for which she challenged her cousin on the spot.

‘Thou hast carved thy name on those rocks, Fritz; I know thou hast.’

Yes; he had carved his name, the very highest of all, and he flattered himself the letters

would not be over-topped to-morrow or next day.

‘Oh, how couldst thou, Fritz?’ and ‘How we wish we could go back and read them,’ Gisela and Fra and Lyd cried; while Mary said, almost audibly, that she was thankful not the simplest wayfaring man could mistake the title for that of an Englishman.

One would have thought the Graf might have been content with his accomplished feat, particularly when his condescending to go with the multitude for what was left them of their excursion, would have raised a feeling of the utmost delight in soft bosoms. But no; the perverse inclination to proceed to the Kleine and the Grosse Winterberg, to the Prebischthor, and to Herrnskretschén, in such adverse circumstances as would have made every other tourist turn back, and which caused even the guides to shake their weather-beaten heads, was more than the Mad Graf could resist. He stayed but to swallow a huge instalment of bread and cheese and a long draught of beer, borrowed a stout stick, buttoned up his coat, hired at a triple fee the most adventurous of the guides, and stepped out into the mist with as determined a stride, to be drenched to the skin, to see nothing, and to risk breaking his own and another’s neck—as if he had been climbing mountains to save lives instead of to imperil them.

And all the time the Graf was leaving double desolation behind him.

Gisela had to submit to fresh pangs of anxiety on his account. No doubt he had returned scatheless from the last adventure, and she saw him depart with a guide, who, as he made the venture for bread to fill his wife and children's mouths, might be depended on as less foolhardy than his leader ; but the little Baroness was never reasonable where her great cousin was concerned.

Fra and Lyd, elevated to a passing height of hope, dropped down into corresponding depths of despair. The girls' mortification was intensified by their having lost the sights which the Graf was bound to go through the form of seeing, and by their being forced to endure the discomfort of remounting the ponies, and having them led down through the slippery, stirred-up mire into which the rain was fast turning the sandy tract of the morning. Fra and Lyd were as susceptible to discomfort, and raised as great an outcry over it, as if they had been a couple of cockneys accustomed only to pavement, with flys, cabs, and omnibuses, to rush to in every shower—or as if they had been their own maids, and not squire's daughters whom their father had expected to 'stand fire.'

Mr. Carteret was annoyed by Fra and Lyd's behaviour, which did not often come before his eyes. Mrs. Carteret was annoyed that he should be annoyed.

The gloom was really becoming infectious ; Mary was fain to seek to check it, and to cheer

herself. She had already told herself that whatever they had missed, they had seen beauty enough to last them for months, and more than their grandmothers had seen in the course of their whole lives. She now struck up a friendship, without a thought of revenging herself on Taff Penryn, with Herr Mönch, who was a stout old soul, had not a fear of rheumatism, and was very happy to have the opportunity of discussing the last English book which he had been reading with so gracious and intelligent a young lady as Miss Carteret.

The book was not a recent publication. It even struck Mary as being rather a juvenile study for a famous chemist. It was the first series of 'The Tales of a Grandfather.' She had some difficulty in keeping her countenance in the infliction of the 'Bruss' and 'Wallaice' of Herr Mönch's pronunciation. Still she could enter heartily into the legends of Castle Dangerous and the escapades of the Gudeman of Ballengeich, which, after all, did not sound inappropriate in this region of Robber Knights' *burgs* and of mad Grafs—madder and idler, because utterly out of season, than the maddest and idlest knight-errant of them all.

The 'Tales of a Grandfather' lasted the enthusiastic old gentleman and Mary, to the exasperation of some of their auditors, all the way down to Schandau; and then, as Mary lamented, she had to bear having her sound-

mininded, sound-hearted old man, worth a dozen of the young men, torn away from her, for he was to leave Schandau by the afternoon's train. And he sought permission, without any objection raised, to carry off his discomfited disciple, Taff Penryn, in his train.

The end of the day was, that, as if to add insult to injury in Fra's eyes, the party had no sooner reached Schandau than the sky cleared and the sun shone out again, sparkling on the thousands of pearly drops which hung on every leaf of every branch of the trees.

Fra would have nothing to say to that sunlit scene, she declined to look on its face. She retired twice as sulkily as Taff Penryn, when an old chemist would not talk chemistry on his holiday to the young man—the ambition of whose life was devouring him, so that he must catch at straws, and fret feverishly when the straws failed him. Fra retreated to her room, and wrote up her correspondence, in which the Graf figured largely, and was freely forgiven for his sins, great and small. She led Lyd to the same employment; she even persuaded Gisela that she had caught a bad cold, and must nurse herself for the remainder of the day.

Mrs. Carteret was really tired, and in need of the rest which she took reluctantly. There was nobody left for Mary to walk about with, save her father, but happily, as she said, who better could

be left to her? Thus the two old friends at their ease, and confidentially, as it were, 'got up' Schandau together thoroughly.

They strolled to the church in the middle of the town, and found it built for strength rather than beauty, with round bell tower and black spire, extraordinary double porch, and leading to the galleries, outer stairs, and outer doors, battered to the last degree. Opposite the sacred building was a large beech tree, with printed bills battered all over the trunk.

They went as far as the little white Bath-house, with its station for the band which played there every Sunday forenoon in summer.

They descended to the edge of the river and watched the busy washerwomen rinsing the clothes in the river, with the ferry boat, distinguished by its sharp red painted prow, and the railway boat by its awning, successively cleaving the water.

They traced the little river, with its many bridges, flowing through the town, and among its gardens, the water generally pure and bright, though once the Carterets saw great sheep-skins anchored in the current.

They wandered into the back settlements, and found always the same delightful glimpses of wooded heights and gleaming water, vine-covered walls, boxes in the windows rich with double wall-flower and stocks, to be succeeded by geraniums, even cacti; the same fat, fair-haired children play-

ing on the door steps, and sunburned women, comely in spite of their toil, greeting them everywhere with a frank '*Guten Tag.*'

They returned to the Forst Haus garden and terrace, where ladies were knitting or writing, and gentlemen sketching or reading the newspapers in little parties under the trees, though the month was only April.

Mary sat long at her room window. She picked out brilliant bits of colour in a woman with a scarlet petticoat and a blue kerchief over her head, carrying home a bundle of sticks on her back. She said to herself this was the place of perpetual motion, and that Taff Penryn need not go further to seek it; for not only the great river flowed on for ever, but its traffic was incessant. The ferry boats and rafts were crossing continually with patient horses and loads of goods. As many as thirty brawny working men carrying their tools, came over together, hieing home from their work; steamboats towed up laden barges; steamboats with passengers arrived every hour. About the last swarmed the custom-house officials, conspicuous by their yellow buttons and the yellow bands round their cap, empowered to examine the goods taken out of Austria. Railway engines on the opposite shore steamed and shrieked day and night.

The sun, which had been inconstant during the day, set with as steadfast a glory as on the

previous night, behind the black rock wall of the Lilienstein ; a light track from his splendour lingered on the water, dying away in the protracted ripple, while a soft misty blush rested on the opposite hills.

Thus closed the holiday to Saxon Switzerland, which was of some moment in Mary Carteret's life.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT WAS OWING TO A DEACONESS.

THE trip, which had been in a great measure, after the manner of trips, a failure to that portion of the pleasure-seekers who had grown to build the most extravagant hopes on its success, left a desirable result, which they would have considered worth any sacrifice, to Fra and Lyd. The Graf Von Felsberg, who, thanks to his good stars, was not lost in the mist into which he had vanished, became from that date a regular, as far as regularity could be associated with him, visitor at Mr. Carteret's house in the Bürgerwiese. Fra and Lyd prided themselves immensely on this sequel; though it was not their circle which he specially affected, and though he could not be said, save for the *éclat* which attended him, to contribute much to the enlivenment of any circle. He came abruptly, often at odd hours; his manner was brusque, though it was within the code of civilised society; he had little to say for himself, and perhaps the best that could be said for his visits was that they were always short.

The fact was that the Graf Von Felsberg was a dull young man, imprisoned in a crust of self-conceit; a cub—a lion's cub, if you will—only partially licked.

If it had not been for his rich gilding and his great vanity, which led him into extraordinary pranks, he would have been nobody. True it was also the fact that he was as brave as a lion, guileless and not unkindly, in spite of his rampant, undisciplined temper and self-will—for the ebullitions of which among his other excesses, he was so far left to himself as to take credit. But who cares for a man simply because he is brave and honest, and has some natural affection? And it is not sufficient to say that the Graf was cared for; he was the observed of all observers, the conquering hero, the restive idol of the most select of the Dresden drawing-rooms that season.

So far as the Carterets went, he found a divided house. Mr. Carteret barely tolerated him; Mrs. Carteret was calmly civil to him as to any other guest; Mary was divided between an inclination to gape and a desperate temptation to make game of him, while at the same time she was grateful to him for making the periods of his stay so brief, because she was sure that it was an act of involuntary consideration which saved her credit as a well-bred woman and courteous entertainer of the house's guests.

It was Fra and Lyd who supplied the hero-

worship ; they made up in quality for any deficiency in quantity, going about on the days when the Mad Graf so much as left his card at the door, as if they had not only received an unapproachable boon, but had earned it by their own unequalled deserts.

Taff Penryn did not make the same acknowledgment of his share in the excursion to Saxon Switzerland, not even to apologise for what he was sensible were his derelictions, since they were committed in the good cause to which he had devoted heart, brain, and life—past, present, and to come, so far as he could command them.

At this epoch a friend took Mary to see the Deaconess House in Bautzner Strasse.

The visitors were shown by one of the pleasant-faced deaconesses, in the close white cap and wide white collar of their indoor dress, over the whole establishment. The inspection extended from the homely chapel and great kitchen, with its huge coppers, the sick children's and sick women's rooms, with their infant and aged occupants, the apothecary's room, where capable deaconesses are taught to mix and dispense drugs, the dining-room, where at the long tables groups of deaconesses were socially drinking coffee—to the upper rooms, where similar sisters worked sewing-machines, or taught classes of pupils, or managed a crèche of healthy babies, and the recreation-room, with its specially pleasant view into the spring garden, and

where there are embroidery frames and pretty work. It was all very busy, and yet at the same time it had a stillness, which seemed to enter into and quiet the spirit.

Mary was much interested in the life, and in thinking what it must be to those women who cast their lots into it from the ages of eighteen to fifty years, who call the house in fondness their Mother House, and who leave it rarely save to perform services of mercy or to found similar institutions. She was not ignorant of the fact that while no nun's irrevocable vow binds the deaconess, still, as in the case of the Catholic Sister of Charity, the opinion even of the Protestant Church and of society is decidedly against her laying aside her deaconess's hood and apron to assume the ordinary bonnet and gown of an ordinary married woman. The special dedication is regarded as broken, the special education wasted, by the final absorption into the common calling.

And here also, as in the case of the cloistered nun, the clerical element plays a large part in the economy. The pastor is even more potent than the father confessor, in that he resides in the centre of the establishment, and has its whole working order constantly under his eye. But seeing that he is a married man, with his wife, a sort of mother of the deaconesses—and that in a family home, with little children playing in the garden, out of the trees of which the parsonage peeps,

the influence is of a more natural and wholesome kind. Indeed, Mary turned to that one primitive little home in the middle of the larger, more artificial institution, with a special sense of its mingled strength and sweetness, as a great boon to the whole community.

The survey ended with the *Mägden Herberge*, or the servants' quarters, where maid-servants can come and stay day and night, and be taught their duties, for threepence a day and their apprentice work; and the *Gasthaus*, where strangers can lodge and board to inspect the system or to be nursed in sickness.

It was *à propos* of this *Gasthaus* that the sister who was conducting Mary and her friend volunteered a communication to Mary. Sister Hanna was not one of the high-born deaconesses—in the grave kindliness of whose bearing a certain gentle stateliness is to be perceived. She was a broad-faced, cheery Saxon peasant, with no objection to a little harmless gossip.

‘All our nursing is not done in the *Gasthaus*,’ she told the visitors; ‘we go out to every house in the town when we are requested, and that is wherever there is serious sickness and the head of the house is not a Catholic, in which case he employs a Grey sister. In the time of the war there was the *Albrecht Verein*, with its nurses, but it had only a queen and not a pastor for its foundress and lawgiver, and so it could not be expected to last.

Ja wohl the Queen, is very good, and so is the King, though he, or his fathers for him, forsook the reformed faith and severed himself from his people, and that was a great misfortune. But nobody denies that he has been a great captain in the war, and that the Queen laboured from morning till night with the bandages and the drugs of her *Albrecht Verein*—though she does get the fashions from France, which goes against the grain with us honest Germans. Still, they are but a king and queen, after all; not like a blessed pastor Fliedner. However, it does not matter whether the nurses are blue or grey, for the welcome they get in the houses when they are wanted. It is quite a holiday, like what Finsen used to be in our village, what with the attention and the gifts I get for the House when I go out to take a turn at nursing. It is “Sister Hanna, what will you be persuaded to eat or drink? Shall it be *quark-kuchen* or *peroggen*?” “What would you like best as a thank-offering, Sister Hanna?” “No, we will not allow you to wear yourself out; you will rest, and just sing us one of your evening hymns,” all day long. Were it not for the suffering of the poor sick, it would be too heavenly for a sinful woman in this world.’

It was at this stage of the conversation, or rather monologue, that the sister turned quickly to Mary, and said, ‘*Ach*, I was waiting upon one of

your countrymen, the last time I was out. He was English, though he had been born in Germany he told me, and had fought for Germany—he spoke German—my gracious young lady, he spoke the beautiful German, not this speech of peasant's German, like me, or like our doctor, or our pastor, but as Pastor Fliedner himself might have spoken.'

Mary pricked her ears, and asked, in her best German, where Sister Hanna had nursed this Englishman who spoke German with the perfection which the excellent Pastor Fliedner might have shown in that as in other attainments.

'At the Pension of Fräulein Körner,' Sister Hanna replied, and Mary's suspicion was made a certainty. She had but to put further questions to relieve her thrill of anxiety, whether it were the typhus, that scourge of German towns, or brain fever bred of his infatuation, which had prostrated Taff Penryn, and to drive away the cold shiver with which she reflected in a flash of recollection, that though Sister Hanna had been speaking with satisfaction rather than regret of her accomplished patient, it was with much the same serenity that she had talked a few minutes previously of a *Herr Ober Jäger*, who had arrived to die peacefully in the *Gasthaus*. The truth was that familiarity had robbed death-beds of all terror to Sister Hanna; and the blessedness of the dead who had given the faintest hope of repentance or of devout practice was so assured to her unquestioning, san-

guine soul, that she was apt to regard them as very much better off than the living who were still in a state of probation, subject to sin, loss, and pain.

‘He had been playing tricks, this young Herr Baron.’ ‘No,’ explained the sister, responding to an exclamation of Mary’s; ‘he was not a baron, truly. *So!* did you think it?’ and she laughed at the mistake. ‘But I always said he should have been—he was so lordly, and yet so homely in his ways, like my young Herr Baron, whom my blessed mother nursed up at the castle in the old days; and so I called this young English Herr—the Herr Baron. He had been playing tricks, but not because he was wild like other young men, poor foolish fellows, but because he was so clever, though he had not a grey hair in his blonde beard—blonde! it is a *kindkopf* beard and all—but inside, it is like the head of my cousin the school-master, or like the shopkeeper of our village, who is a real Doctor Faustus, always full of contrivances and inventions to keep away the wasps from his treacle, and to put the bacon through nettle smoke, so that the flies will be stung as they attempt to settle upon it. I do not know that my Herr Baron’s tricks were so useful. But what does he do, after burning the whole of the Fräulein’s stock of wood, which should have lasted for cooking till summer, in his own stove, and shattering lamp-glasses and pipkins till she

thought that he would shatter the walls of the house about her and the rest of the boarders? She would have begged him to find another pension, only she is right good-hearted, Fräulein Körner, and she had a liking for this boarder. She thought if he did all this mischief in her house, where he was looked after, he would make away with himself, out and out—what with his experiments, and his being a single man without father, mother or relative—in another house, where he might not be seen to. And what does he do next?’

‘What does he do?’ repeated Mary, quickly.

‘Mein Fräulein, he takes to breaking wood in his shirt sleeves, sawing, and hammering, filling his room with noise and shavings, and with not a fagot, shelf, or stool to show for it—only some rude toys, which a child would hardly look at on Christmas eve. And as my gentleman was acting the carpenter, not being used to tools, he let the hatchet slip on his thigh. There was an artery cut, and there might have been lock-jaw. I can tell you he had fainted from loss of blood, though he is a strong young man, and the Fräulein was at her wits’ end before the doctor and I reached the house.’

‘But he has recovered from the injury, and there has been no lock-jaw,’ urged Mary.

‘He has recovered this time,’ nodded Sister Hanna, ‘but he’ll chop off his head or blow it clean off his shoulders on the next occasion; for

the Herr Baron, just because he is so like a Herr Baron, is not one whit daunted. He would not say that he was sorry for what he had brought upon himself, he would not promise not to do it again, not for the Fräulein, or me, or the doctor, not for all the treasures which lie under the mountains. Still, I confess I had a favour for my patient, who was a true soldier as well as a Herr Baron. He called that ugly cut nothing to the gun-shot and sabre wounds he had seen; and he was so helpful to himself, so reluctant to give trouble—I am sure I cannot tell whether that belonged to his character as a nobleman or a soldier. Neither was he at all sorry for himself—quite the contrary—he saw his way to what he wished, he believed, and his hand would not slip when he tried again. And so he would laugh and read, when you could not hear his voice above a whisper, if we would let him have his books and papers; or he would chat with his friends—he had many friends—as happy as a king.’

‘I know him,’ said Mary; ‘he is very clever and good and obstinate, as you say.’

Mary carried to her father the tidings of the accident which had befallen Taff Penryn. She recounted it in the words of the deaconess. It never struck her that there was any sting in them to the elder man till she came to Sister Hanna’s random remark, that her patient ‘should have been a Herr Baron.’

‘That was a chance hit,’ said Mr. Carteret, in the middle of his curiosity and genuine concern.

‘How?’ said Mary, uncertain what he meant. ‘Oh! because you could not help his father being a just man in the matter of my grandaunt Sophia’s disposal of the Warren. But it would not have signified, so far as they are concerned, had the Penryns taken the Warren; it would have been melted in crucibles or planed into saw-dust so soon as Taff Penryn came of age.’

‘You cannot tell; it might have given another and a more rational bent to his fancies. I can remember when the fact that agricultural chemistry was to put new life and power into the earth, and to make it answer to every touch, had a great charm for me, though it did not prosper in my hands. But that is not the question. To have been temporarily injured and disabled may have done the fellow some good, though, unfortunately, his nurse describes him as hardened under his cross. People used to say that there was nothing for hot blood like letting out a drop or two; in the same manner there was no cure of a boy’s mania for the sea equal to sending him to undergo the petty hardships of even a prosperous voyage.’

‘And you think,’ said Mary, sceptically, ‘that the sharpest accident—the recurrence of which, at the same time, he can easily provide against, will stop Taff Penryn in his self-chosen career as an inventor?’

‘I suppose I think that a burnt child, however superficially burnt, ought to dread the fire which he has been scandalously provoking,’ said Mr. Carteret; ‘and, Mary, don’t seek to deprive me of the very slender hope and hold which this misadventure gives me over Penryn.’

But Mr. Carteret returned from the special visit which he had made to Fräulein Körner’s pension for the purpose of solemnly condoling with Taff Penryn, and making the accident a text for a sermon, and announced that his slender hope was annihilated. ‘He is not one whit discomfited; he is cockier in his craze than ever. In place of being ashamed of the idiotic cause of having been within half an inch of losing his life—for the accident had been serious—I happened to meet the doctor, and he told me that the artery was just taken up in time—the fellow is as white as a ghost yet, and cannot walk across the room without a stick—he is as inclined to exult over the wound as if it had been got in one of their battles. He said something of the necessary training, and of the scars, which were honourable in any field, but doubly honourable on the field of peace and progress; and that no leader should expect, or hope, to be without his scars far more indelible than this scratch of his. I said, did he mean that he was at liberty to hazard his life for a crotchet? Not for a crotchet, he answered, coolly; but for the least of the long train of dis-

coveries which should culminate in man's triumph over nature, he was not only at liberty to hazard his life, but to lay it down gladly. He had perfect faith that the Great Giver, who bade man go forth and possess the earth, would think a life well bestowed in bringing the race nearer to its inheritance. In short, he considers himself quite warranted in poisoning his blood or paralysing his nerves for a scientific whim any day.'

'In chopping off his head or blowing it off his shoulders, as Sister Hanna expressed it. But, papa, is there not something in this of the tone of a hero and martyr of science?'

'Pshaw! Mary,' exclaimed her father, impatiently; 'don't degrade the epithets. To have heroism and martyrdom you must have a cause worthy of the words. You don't call hero and martyr the poor fool and dupe who imagines he can fly, and whose sham wings bring him in violent and deadly contact with the ground at his feet, if there be grinning brutes to permit the preposterous experiment?'

'I don't know what I call him, I know what I call the grinning brutes. But, papa, where and how is one to draw the line? You admit that you yourself were among the students who sought marvels and miracles in agricultural chemistry.'

'Child, tangible results rewarded the very first investigation; but when in the course of centuries none has appeared to repay the most arduous

researches, what do you make of the hair-brained enthusiast who still expects an answer in the affirmative ?’

‘I make of him the last solitary leader of a forlorn hope,’ said Mary, with a shake of the head, but a rising flush in the cheek ; ‘like the last of the ancient mariners who will sail in quest of the North Pole.’

‘Rather, since there happens to be what stands for a North Pole in natural philosophy, while there is no such fantastic dream as perpetual motion,’ corrected her father, ‘like the thistle-headed adventurers who made the Eldorado their goal.’

‘Thistle-headed !’ protested Mary, indignantly. ‘Raleigh, Sir Humphrey Gilbert !’

‘Well, if they had waited and tried it in this nineteenth century, assuredly thistle-headed would have been a mild term for them,’ said Mr. Carteret, a little conscience-stricken.

‘Papa,’ said Mary, half gaily, half pathetically, ‘you asked me to spare you a grain of hope in arresting Taff Penryn by a nearly-healed cut in the thigh ; will you leave me my leader of a forlorn hope, my one believing dreamer and daring investigator of the unknown ?’

‘Certainly ; but madmen more or less learned have not ceased on the earth. You may reckon the editor of “Zadkiel’s Almanac” among them, though you have not the pleasure of his acquaintance. Does your forlorn leader go in for astro-

logy, after the fashion of Dr. Dee and Cornelius Agrippa?’

‘I do not know—no, I should say decidedly, no. Don’t you remember he has had a German education, and goes in for the laborious verification of every fact in nature, in the middle of what you regard as his mysticism?’

‘Any way, you are welcome to my share of the acquaintance, since I can make nothing of it. Perhaps your womanish romance, with its wondering credulity, may flatter or soothe his diseased brain into submitting to human restrictions. I am going to send your mother and you to make the acquaintance of Fräulein Körner. She seems to me a very good sort of woman, and I wish her to see that this young fool is not absolutely without friends. I must show her that, as old neighbours of his people, we are indebted to her for her care of him. I would do as much as that, I hope, for still more culpable young fools, both among our countrymen and our entertainers,’ said Mr. Carteret, thinking while he spoke of the trouble he had lately taken to extricate a young Englishman and a young German from a dubious betting transaction at the club, ‘at least, I owe the little I can do to Taff Penryn’s son.’

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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